

# THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

## **ECUMENICAL NUMBER**

The Church of South India—its Challenge

The Church of South India to an Outsider

Church Union in North India

The Syrian Church

Evangelism in India

Theology for a Missionary Church

The Indian Ecumenical Study Conference—

Findings

The Church and the Social Challenge

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Book Reviews

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# Editorial Notes

This is a special Ecumenical Number of The Indian Journal of Theology. The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, an Asian Study Conference, the World Christian Youth Conference and a conference of the World's Student Christian Federation will be meeting in India during December and January. India will be the host to a large number of visitors from Churches abroad. We extend to all of them a hearty welcome. This number of the Journal is dedicated to all those engaged in the work of promoting the interests of Ecumenism. We are printing several articles in this number which deal with various aspects of the life of the Church in India, and we hope that regular subscribers as well as our overseas visitors will find them useful and informative.

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Future church historians will say that this present period is notable for a growing sense of ecumenism in the life of the church everywhere. Ecumenism is the logical result of the world-wide missionary movement of the last two centuries. The founding of churches in the far-flung lands of the globe through the missionary enterprise of the churches of the West had given to older and the younger churches alike a vision of the World Church. Furthermore, it was in the mission field, perhaps, that the initial urge for getting together for mutual understanding was born; at any rate the problems on the mission field demanded consultation between missionary societies. Even as early as the year 1806 William Carey proposed an ecumenical conference. In a letter to Fuller dated May 15th, 1806, Carey wrote thus, 'The Cape of Good Hope is now in the hands of the English. Should it continue so, would it not be possible to have a general association of all denominations of Christians from the four quarters of the World kept there once in every ten years? I earnestly recommend this plan. Let the first meeting be in the year 1810 or 1812 at the furthest. I have no doubt it would be attended with very important effects. We could understand one another better; and more entirely enter into one another's views by two hours conversation, than by two or three years' epistolary correspondence'. As is well known now, it was a hundred years after Carey's suggestion that a conference similar to that suggested by him met in Edinburgh. Carey's faith has been amply justified since Edinburgh. The Editor feels deeply the significance of the fact that he is writing these notes from the very place where Carey had written his letter to Fuller a hundred and forty-six years ago! The Ecumenical Movement therefore has a special significance to the younger churches whose origin is to be traced back to missionary work. We have to take our place in the counsels of the World Church, making our own humble

contribution from our growing heritage to enrich the life of the Church Universal.

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If the Ecumenical Movement is at least partly the result of the modern missionary enterprise of the church, it is perhaps right to say that it will continue to thrive only if the missionary interest of the church everywhere is kept continuously alive. One of the besetting sins of the church anywhere is 'introversion'. The problems connected with the faith and the inner life of the church are always of very great importance, but their very importance may blind the church to its missionary vocation—to that most urgent of all urgencies, viz. *to go out of itself to proclaim the Gospel*. To overcome 'introversion' self-forgetfulness is the therapy. This is achieved in self-giving and the missionary vocation of the church is the most supreme expression of church's self-giving. Ecumenism demands a certain measure of self-forgetfulness. These words have relevance both to the younger churches and the older churches. It is gratifying that the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council are now in association. Consolidation and a forward movement may both be achieved especially in the areas of the younger churches through the co-operation of the two ecumenical bodies.

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One of the other results of the modern missionary movement is the great impulse among many younger churches for church union. It may be freely admitted that the urge for Church Union is partly pragmatic, but only *partly*. One need not be apologetic even for this. A small church in a vast pagan world cannot afford the luxury of denominational exclusiveness. It has to justify its claim before the pagan world that it possesses the power to unite people of different ethos into one single body. Here is something that condemns our divisions and inverts the order of things so that the position of the church as a judge of the world is changed into that of the judged! Two brothers of a Hindu family worship in the same temple and partake of the same 'sacred food' offered to their god. They become in due course Christians, but owing to geographical situations they become members of two different denominations that are not in communion with each other. As Hindus they went to the same temple to worship and partook of the same 'sacred food'. Now as Christians they worship in two different churches and cannot join at the Sacred Feast of the Lord! For the Hindu no amount of theological wisdom can explain this scandal. Christian disunity and denominationalism are commented upon by our Hindu history teachers in schools and colleges.

This is only part of the reason for the urge behind the church union movements in some of the younger churches. The main reason is that the Gospel, the preaching of which brought them into existence and which they in turn have to preach continuously if they are to exist in the pagan world, is the Gospel that proclaims 'One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism'.



Along with the growth of ecumenical consciousness in recent years, there has also been a steady growth in the urge for confessional movements. In one sense perhaps this is a logical development. Ecumenism presupposes church loyalty and church loyalty is first cultivated through the participation in the life of that branch of the church to which one belongs. But what is a psychological fact and a fact even spiritually helpful need not be elevated to one of a perpetual spiritual necessity. Confessional movements have not been always friendly to church union movements. Perhaps at this stage confessional movements are necessary to strengthen the World Council of Churches. Eventual Christian unity must perhaps be preceded by a deepening sense of appreciation of one's own confessional heritage. As long as the search for unity is there, the purely contingent need not frighten us.

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There are some who are obviously frightened that the World Council of Churches may tend to bring into existence a Super-World Church, parallel to the Church of Rome. And the plea of some of the representatives of the younger churches that the World Council of Churches should give more heed to the movements of the church union is sometimes misunderstood as a plea for the creation of such a Super-World Church. We understand that 'One Church' does not necessarily mean one Super-World Church. According to our understanding, the New Testament Church though one, found its unit to be in the local Church. The reality of the Church Universal was to be found in the reality of the local Church—a worshipping and witnessing community in its own locality. Oneness and plurality are reconcilable and organic union need not necessarily end in a highly centralized organization. Geographical and cultural differences there will be and administrative autonomy will accordingly be necessary.

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Those of the West who are interested in the church and missionary work in India, ask often what the prospects of Communism are in India. Someone said that foreigners are pop-eyed and natives are shut-eyed in regard to the phenomenon of Communism in India! We think there is great deal of wisdom in this statement. It is reported that some missionaries on deputation among their home churches are tending to give a far graver view and estimate of the present situation in India than facts justify. On the other hand, it also seems a fact that some of our indigenous leadership is not alive to the implications of some of the recent events in India and on the whole seems unaware of the fortunes of the church in lands where Communism won absolute political power. While there is no need for our friends in the West to think that all is lost in India, our Christian leaders at home must show greater concern for the future of the country and the Church.

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'The Church in India must repent of its social compromises with caste, lingualism and communalism'. 'We are nice, decent people who practise caste, demand dowries, exhibit social and colour prejudices. . . .



and sing "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble and meek" without turning a hair'. These sentences are lifted from an article that appears elsewhere in this magazine. One may not agree with all that is said in this article but it is a reminder to the church in India and elsewhere that there is a great deal of worldliness in it. With such worldliness within it, the church cannot fight with vigour and conviction evil outside it. Few Christians will deny that Communism constitutes a real danger for human welfare and for those values for which the Christian faith stands. At the same time, neither the church that makes compromises with the world and its ways nor the church that turns away in contempt from the world in which it is set and resorts exclusively to an other-worldly pietism, can effectively fight against Communism. The present situation in India and in the world calls for repentance on the part of the church here and elsewhere, for its divisions, its worldly ways and its ineffective witness to the Christian gospel of redemption. There is also a call to us particularly in India for a positive and concrete approach in accordance with the mind of the Master, to contemporary problems that are a source of confusion and even despair to men everywhere.

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It is a matter of great satisfaction that the World Council of Churches is alive to the great need to train Christian churches everywhere to take an intelligent and active Christian interest in contemporary problems of the human society. We commend to our readers the study programme of the World Council of Churches, sponsored through its study Department. Through the activities of this Department there is a continuous flow of ecumenical conversation the world over, on such subjects as 'The Christian Hope', 'The Responsible Society', 'Meaning of Work', 'Race Relations' etc.

Lest one should think that the activities of the World Council of Churches in this regard are confined only to the promotion of theoretical discussion, we draw the attention of our readers to the activities of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs—a body jointly set up by the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. The report of this Commission concerning its activities during the year 1951 makes very inspiring reading. Among other activities, its 'lobbying' (using the word in its best sense) in appropriate places has played a no mean part in such matters as the formulation of 'the Charter of Human Rights' by the U.N.O.'s Commission on the subject and in the spreading concept among the industrially advanced countries, of aid to underdeveloped countries.

On the whole the two ecumenical bodies, viz. the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, which now work in close co-operation, deserve our fullest support and co-operation. There can be no doubt that they are potent instruments in the hands of God for the furtherance of His purposes in the world.



# The Challenge of the Church of South India

to Other Churches and to the Ecumenical Movement

DAVID CHELLAPPA

The challenge of the C.S.I. is both to do certain things and to avoid certain others. This is only to be expected, seeing that the C.S.I. has been characterized by *Crockford* as a 'dangerous experiment which ought, nevertheless, to be tried!' ('Lambeth 1948' used the words 'heroic experiment'.) Tensions and anomalies there are, and indeed there must be, and they are neither few nor unimportant, but they are, for the most part, mostly reflexions of the tensions and anomalies present amongst the parent churches.

The primary challenge of the C.S.I. is perhaps by its very being—just because it exists and *lives*. Here, at long last, for the first time in Church History, is a union of episcopal and non-episcopal churches. Church union is thus removed from the realm of theory and discussion to that of fact and actuality. After all, other things being equal, it is not a united church that needs justification! And indeed not only its parents, but also its neighbours in North India are taking up the challenge.

## Challenge to the Concept of Denomination

The C.S.I. throws a challenge to the very concept of denomination, for the C.S.I. is in the nature of an attempted return to the New Testament conception of the Church as the whole body of Christians, worshipping and witnessing, in a particular locality. During recent centuries, we have become so accustomed to, and even complacent about or proud of, different denominations calling themselves 'churches' in a non-New Testament sense, and functioning side by side, that we have ceased to regard the phenomenon as being abnormal. There is even growing up, along-side of and partly as a reaction to, the ecumenical movement, what has been called 'Confessional Imperialism', i.e. 'pan-denominationalisms' of different kinds, harmless enough if only for the purpose of deepening the understanding of their own heritage when 'conversing' with other denominations, but objectionable to the extent that they tend to rivet the bondage of the younger Churches and to create an ecumenical deadlock<sup>1</sup>. The younger Churches, with their

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<sup>1</sup> C. W. Ranson, 'The Church is the Mission', *N.C.C. Review*, June-July, 1952, p. 278.



theological backwardness and their economic dependence, are particularly helpless in the face of such sectarian counter-moves.

### The Challenge of the C.S.I. Pattern of Episcopacy

The C.S.I. has accepted the historic episcopate without committing itself to subscription to what is technically termed the Apostolic Succession. The historic episcopate, having thus been incorporated, the bishop is, in fact, coming to be regarded in the C.S.I. as the centre of unity *par excellence*; he is on the way to being a truly pastoral and a liturgical figure. Unlike the Tractarians, who emphasized the theory of the Apostolic Succession but failed in their attempt to restore the second-century episcopate to England, the C.S.I. which began with no theory but only the fact of the historic episcopate, seems to be reproducing the second-century episcopate in South India. In other words, there is being hammered out in South India a pattern of episcopacy, not perhaps entirely new in the history of the Church, but largely forgotten since the early centuries.

### Wanted : A Doctrine of the Church

If the C.S.I. has not yet formulated a *full* doctrine of the church, it is not an omission due to oversight, but of set purpose, for, in the divided state of Christendom and in a newly united Church, such a doctrine can only be *evolved*, not *invented* afresh.<sup>1</sup> The C.S.I. has not yet issued any Confession of its own, for the present considering the historic creeds sufficient as a starting-point; otherwise such a confession may easily suffer from the handicap that besets most such historic documents which, composed in a different theological climate, soon become out-moded and even prove a hindrance to advance. After all, Truth is one, and its expression another; the saving verities of the Christian Gospel, which are few, must necessarily find a different expression in India, but a young church must not be rushed into such an expression. But what the C.S.I. *has* done is to have given concrete embodiment to an idea of the church which appears to have gained wide currency in recent years, an idea which received its first impetus from Streeter's *The Primitive Church*, but was developed further by Dr. L. Hodgson. Dr. Hodgson's view may be summarized as one which sees the Divine will at work alike in creation and in evolution. The church is thus a creation, but at the same time, it has to be evolved. This is the conception that has been put into practice by the C.S.I., although without employing identical phraseology. The church, like man, was originally created by God, but having split asunder and consequently lost, but not entirely lost, His image, must now in union endeavour to evolve into something of its original pattern. This process of evolution must necessarily be gradual. We do not know where it will lead; in the words of the Moderator of the C.S.I. at the second Synod: 'the demand to know where we are going is one which no Christian has the right to make.' But such a full doctrine of the church, so the C.S.I. believes, stands a fairer chance of formulation in a united church. There is some hope, in a united church, of a synthesis of the

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<sup>1</sup> Read in this connexion C.S.I. *Const.* II. 2, 8, 9.



different traditions, of separating what is essential from what is not; whereas, in denominational existence, the emphasis is more likely to be on the differences and, therefore, to be one-sided. The C.S.I. claims to be on the road to such unity but it does not pretend to have arrived at it; it is willing to reform and correct itself in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit shall reveal it.<sup>1</sup>

In this connexion, Bishop Stephen Neill, referring to a Roman Catholic work in German on the doctrine of the church, with the remarkable title *The Doctrine of the Church in Development*, draws our attention to the fact that 'even the Church of Rome, which has defined most things, has left here a wide area for further theological exploration'. And he goes on: 'If no one Christian communion has yet worked out a precise and satisfying theology of the church, its nature and its limits, the relationship between the visible and the invisible, the sense in which the church is the body of Christ its Head, it may be that, in the new fellowships which are coming into being in the twentieth century, new light and understanding may be given, through fellowship, and through the new tensions that life in fellowships brings.'<sup>2</sup> And the Moderator of the C.S.I., the Most Rev. A. M. Hollis, opening his essay in the Report already quoted, (p. 221) reveals perhaps the only satisfactory concluding stage in this discussion: 'We are conscious as we read our own Constitution, that it was written in the days when we belonged to separate churches, and that because we are now one church, we already see things somewhat differently. . . . Many problems of the conference hall that seemed almost insoluble when we faced each other from outside, with an obligation to defend the separate denominational emphasis, have taken on a very different appearance when we find ourselves handling them, as practical issues, within the fellowship of one Church.'

The C.S.I. comprehensive, but not latitudinarian, seeks to integrate Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist and Reformed traditions, and this integration is taking place as the result of *living together* and *growing together*. In this process of integration, not only Episcopacy but Congregationalism and Presbyterianism are all being modified and are emerging in a different form, with a certain release of power, a growth in theological understanding, and an increased fellowship, at least on the Synod and Council levels. Another fruit of this integration is the development, by the C.S.I., of its own form of discipline, which is unlike that formerly in vogue in churches of either excessive authoritarian or excessive Congregationalist traditions. (Incidentally, both that type of Episcopacy, so similar to political autocracy, and that type of Congregationalism, so similar to political democracy, have alike given rise to similar situations in Church discipline which the C.S.I. is having to face in its new set-up.)

### The Challenge of Corporate Worship

Forms of worship play a significant part in keeping denominations divided from others but united amongst themselves. The Book of

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<sup>1</sup> A. M. Hollis, in *The Nature of the Church* (SCM)—Faith and Order Report, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Neill, *Christian Partnership* (SCM), p. 90.



Common Prayer, for instance, is at once the badge of Anglican unity and of Anglican separateness. But the C.S.I. Liturgy (and the less known new Confirmation Order), have proved that both Catholics and Evangelicals can agree on a form of Sacramental Worship that is at once more Catholic and Evangelical, because more primitive, than any of the denominational liturgies. The C.S.I. Liturgy does not seek so much to modify any of the other Liturgies as to go right behind them. The emergence, therefore, of a C.S.I. Liturgy and its general approval by Anglican and Reformed Liturgical authorities, is no mean achievement, and may be said to be a challenge in a sphere where both theological and 'non-theological' factors are powerfully at work. A C.S.I. authority, of Anglican tradition, writes: 'None who has taken part at all regularly in the C.S.I. Liturgy can doubt that something fresh has come in for us all. Every time I go back to one of our old forms, I am conscious of the drop in a corporate sense, and I believe that we are being led into a form of satisfying Confirmation Service.'

### The Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement

The Ecumenical Movement, it is well known, owes its genesis to conditions which arose, in course of time, in what is known as the Mission Field or the Younger Churches. The coming into being, therefore, of the C.S.I. is not so much a challenge to the Ecumenical Movement as its first fruits. The World Council of Churches, therefore, ought to rejoice, and indeed rejoices, in the birth of the C.S.I. And indeed, Dr. Visser t'Hooft, when asked to address its second Synod, said in acceding to the invitation, that he was 'feeling like a fish in water!'

But the tendency to regard efficiency of organization as an end in itself is a peril to be guarded against; that is the temptation of the bureaucrat. Then there is also the attraction to look upon intellectual integrity of ideas as another end in itself. Thus Dr. Alexander Findlay, in his 'Jesus and His Parables', has observed that 'the best modern evangelical theology is in real danger of creating a new kind of Pharisaism interested in Christian ideas such as the . . . theology of crisis rather than any common earthly men and women.'<sup>1</sup> But the real church, as an organism and Fellowship of Believers, stands or falls, neither by efficiency of organization, nor by the intellectual integrity of ideas, but by the spiritual integrity of persons. In the words of the Rev. J. S. Garrett: 'this personal integrity can only be manifest in the context of local congregations grouped together in regional churches. The World Council of Churches cannot, as such, be the field of this essential factor in the church's life. If it remains content with a bureaucratic organization of common action amongst otherwise divided churches, or with providing a clearing-house for theological ideas, without promoting organic unity, it will have failed in its primary purpose.' The W.C.C., of course, has no other justification than as the spearhead of the Ecumenical Movement.

While on the subject of the Ecumenical Movement, it is useful to note a little more closely the background against which the C.S.I. took shape. The various missionary bodies working in India had agreed, as

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Findlay, 'Jesus and His Parables' (Religious Book Club), in Preface.



a practical necessity forced on them by pastoral and evangelistic exigencies, on the principle of the comity of missionary expansion, and thus in effect had unconsciously reasserted the New Testament idea of the local Church as an embodiment of the Universal Church. But as the post-Reformation Church, unlike the New Testament Church, was divided into denominations, the Concordat virtually made a man's denomination a matter of geography rather than of theology or conviction. This comity of missions has been increasingly stultified and rendered foolish when Christians of one tradition have moved from one area to another where the tradition was different. The problem, therefore, was either to disregard the comity of missions and to allow all denominations to work everywhere, side by side, (if not in virtual rivalry), or to go back to the New Testament idea mentioned above. It is with this background in mind that the whole union movement in the South must be studied.<sup>1</sup>

### The C.S.I. A Foreign Church ?

One challenge, which has yet to be squarely faced, is the challenge inherent in the essential foreignness of the C.S.I., a fact to which the 'Derby Report' drew attention. It is foreign in its leadership, both central and local ; nine out of its fourteen bishops are men from overseas, and that is not the whole story! The C.S.I. is in fact a 'combine' of several foreign churches, and is, therefore, just as foreign as any of them was in isolation, if not more foreign. It is not only foreign in its personnel ; it is foreign in its very *ethos* ; it is foreign in theology ; it is foreign in its administrative machinery ; and above all, it is foreign in its material resources. No wonder that, not taking into account Bishops and other conference *habitués*, there is more enthusiasm for the C.S.I. among most—not all—Missionaries than among indigenous clergy, which latter group hardly feel that they have a stake in the church, or among the laity, who were not adequately prepared for the coming union and have, therefore, largely reconciled themselves to it as inevitable. (When we use the word 'foreign', we do not use it as necessarily meaning less than Christian, but we do insist that the church is not rooted in the soil.) While, therefore, it is right that the C.S.I. should have been inaugurated, it would be a tragedy if drastic and early steps were not taken towards making both the C.S.I. and other churches indigenous, yet conscious of their incompleteness except in their ecumenical setting. As things stand, there is no guarantee that, in a crisis such as has overtaken China, the C.S.I. would fare much better than either the separated Churches in India would do or the churches in China have already done. The Editor of *Theology* once characterized the C.S.I. scheme as 'a high-minded amalgam of Anglican, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian elements, but not really a true Indian expression of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'.<sup>2</sup> It is only fair to add that the evolution of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of India is much more likely to come about in union than in isolation.

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 210-211, article by Garrett, 'Inter-communion in Churches' in *Intercommunion* (SCM).

<sup>2</sup> *Theology*, April, 1943, p. 74.



## Non-Theological Factors

It has too often been assumed that disunity is due merely to theological differences; if it were so, the free churches, which, as a rule, have hardly had amongst them the problem of intercommunion or the exchange of pulpits, would have become united long ago—and so would some of the Syrian churches. The fact that often, when conversations are about to lead to negotiations, and negotiations to organic unity, they suddenly break down at the last moment, has given rise to thought as to whether other factors have been at work. Dr. C. H. Dodd, recognized this years ago, and his letter on the subject, together with similar findings from America and the author's remarks, form a chapter entitled 'Non-Theological Factors' in O.S. Tomkins' book *The Church in the Purpose of God* (SCM). And a report in the *Ecumenical Review* for January, 1952, recognizes that non-theological factors may either 'hinder or accelerate the church's unity'; and it supplies headings for self-examination.

### The Principles of Federation and Supplemental Ordination

In the Church Union discussions, two questions crop up sooner or later, namely, (i) whether federation, instead of organic unity, would not suffice, and (ii) whether it would not be better to start with a unified ministry. As for federation, the idea is nothing new, and in the course of the negotiations in South India, the proposal, both in its theological and other aspects, was carefully considered and abandoned, as the germ of that idea was already in force in the comity of missions, an arrangement which was breaking down. Secondly, as regards any form of supplemental ordination or re-commissioning, this proposal was discussed and finally given up. Our more ambitious neighbours in Ceylon and North India are contemplating a 'neat and tidy' scheme by means of what appears to us a short-cut, but we are convinced that there is no short-cut to unity when disunity has held away for 400 years. Whatever form of ministry may emerge after a generation in the C.S.I., we have started with the recognition of ministerial equality, but making provision for tender consciences.

We all recognize, even the Romans in theory, that, when a person is baptized, he is baptized into the universal church. It ought not to be impossible to go one step further in church union *rapprochements* and recognize, at least as a measure of ecclesiastical economy, that, when a person is ordained, he is ordained to the universal church. In this connexion, it is interesting to note that Bishop Stephen Neill who, with a view to obviating the anomaly of episcopally and non-episcopally ordained ministers in the same Church, had formerly espoused the idea of mutual commissioning or supplemental ordination, has finally come to the conclusion, along with certain Anglicans and others, that there is no way but the C.S.I. way.

### The Challenge of the C.S.I. and of the Ecumenical Movement to the Anglican Church

As far as the Anglican Communion is concerned, it must, before long, make up its mind as to whether it is prepared to be in communion with another Church which is Episcopal but which is also in communion



with non-Episcopal Churches. After all, Lambeth has characterized the South India Church as 'part of a movement towards general and complete union'. (It must be remembered, in this connexion, that the Church of England is already in communion with the Church of Sweden which is itself in full communion with other Lutheran, non-episcopal Churches and also that, for nearly a century and a half, until 1862, when the last missionary in Lutheran Orders died, the Church of England in South India had, amongst its ministers, non-episcopally ordained ministers, Indian and foreign.) The principle of free intercommunion is as important to the free churches as the historic Episcopate is to the Anglicans. In the words of Bishop Newbigin, in his 'Reunion of the Church':

'If South India is to be excommunicated by the Anglican Communion, it can only be because that Communion has decided that it cannot regard the non-episcopal Churches as parts of the universal church, that, apart from the historic episcopate, there is no church. If that decision is made, it must also *bring to an end Anglican participation in the ecumenical movement*, (italics ours) for it will have involved a clear rejection of its starting-point. If on the other hand, the South India Scheme is recognized as a valid attempt, within the conditions of a particular part of the world, to restore the visible unity of the church, then one cannot help feeling that the whole process of theological and ecclesiastical re-integration within the ecumenical movement will receive a new impetus.'<sup>1</sup>

### Return to Christ!

In the last resort, the movement towards unity is a movement towards Christ, from whom we have strayed away in different directions and thus strayed away from each other's fellowship as well. The challenge to return to Christ and, therefore, to unity amongst ourselves, could hardly be better expressed than in the closing paragraph of John A. Mackay on 'Thoughts on Truth and Unity', in his book *Christianity on the Frontier*:

'Jesus Christ, because He is the source of Christian truth and the soul of Christian unity, is also the goal of Truth's quest and its living expression on life's road. Christian thinking and Christian living are thus a moving out from Christ toward Christ and a return from Christ to Christ. Christian truth is inexhaustible in its meaning and Christian unity is inexhaustible in its possibility.'<sup>2</sup>



Apart from Jesus, men argue whether God is love; in his presence men believe it and live by it. Apart from Jesus, men argue about the meaning of life; in his presence they cease arguing and begin to follow. Apart from Jesus, men argue about human responsibility for sin; in his presence they fall down and ask forgiveness. To meet him is to know the truth, the truth that sets men free.—Daniel T. Niles in *That They May Have Life*.

<sup>1</sup> L. Newbigin, *The Reunion of the Church* (SCM), p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Mackay, *Christianity on the Frontier*, (Lutterworth Press), p. 206.

# An Outsider Looks at the Church of South India

WILLIAM LASH

In the fifth year since the Inauguration of the Church of South India we look upon a Church which is already taking its own place in Ecumenical circles. It is a Church which has sufficient leaders of note to be invited to other lands to interpret the phenomenon it is to the Christians of those lands, and to take part in the general consultations of Christendom. Is not one of its bishops Chairman of the Committee of 'creative brains' of the World Council of Churches! It is a Church also which attracts visitors from other Churches, so that we of the more humdrum communions of the North half ruefully take the tag ends of the time devoted by these important emissaries, if even we can secure a tag end!

The challenge its very existence offers to the rest of us reminds me of a conversation I had, not long before the Inauguration, with one who is now among the chief of the Church of South India. I had sought reassurance of the wisdom of timing the Inauguration before the reception of the new body by others was clear. I was told that the time had come to cease from talking and to act. So long as there was room for talking, consideration could be endless and the need to make up minds indefinitely postponed. The actual existence of a Church combining episcopal and formerly non-episcopal elements would compel conclusions by that very existence. The Church of South India *is*, and Christians are anxious to know what it is.

My own visits to the South have been for the most part of an official nature to help deal with abnormal situations, and I have not had opportunity of observing the normal functioning of the Church. Those who have, testify to the reality of the union in the councils of the Church. They say that it is impossible in a debate to judge the former allegiances of the speakers. The limits of discussion are the limits of an integrated entity. Such reports are most encouraging and justify the venture of faith which the Inauguration inevitably was. On occasion those of us outside may be tempted to feel that this integration is overstressed and the emphasis on the wider freedom of the Church may inspire a somewhat resentful reaction from those who have not yet made a similar venture. It may also be felt that the definition of relations with the Church of South India which we have been compelled by its existence to make have not been fully appreciated by that Church. In such a definition the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon still distinguished between ministers of the Church, and even those episcopally ordained and consecrated. Such distinction was necessary in our cir-



cumstances and in accord with our varying degrees of relation with other episcopal Churches. We can understand the preference of the Church of South India for a greater degree of equal acceptance, but would ask for a realization that the attitude of the present may be necessary to ensure not only a relation commonly accepted now, but to prepare for one which can be of equal common acceptance in the future, among our own members.

### Doctrine and Liturgical Forms

The existence of the Church of South India has forced minds to be made up on matters still discussed and disputed. In the last five years the orthodoxy of the Church in doctrine has found more and more acceptance. This has come from the clarification of actual statements on doctrine, and in the examination of the liturgical forms issued by the Church. Of course in the circumstances of the union these liturgical forms are permissive, and the members of the Church are still free to use forms in use before the inauguration of the Church, but it is most encouraging that the forms for Ordination, the Holy Communion and Confirmation, which alone have the imprint of the Church as a whole, are such as may be accepted generally as expressive of doctrine which can be generally accepted. In the latter two, there are alternatives, and there would naturally be choice among those alternatives which would produce a form much more acceptable with one selection than the form which would emerge from another, but the essentials are safeguarded whatever alternatives are used. My own impression is that Baptism had the widest diversity of approach before the Union, and will be the hardest nut for liturgical authority in the church to crack. On the other hand the doctrine of Christian Initiation is exercising minds all over Christendom at this time.

If the existence of the Church of South India in forcing minds to be made up has had a favourable issue in the matter of doctrine, this cannot be said to have been so favourable in the matter of the ministry. The reasons for this are several. The thirty year period, during which the ministry will become increasingly episcopal, is not certain at the end of it to lead to a purely episcopal ministry. This has been one of the chief grounds of concern in some Anglican circles. The actual presence in the church of ministries of diverse origin causes anxiety about the privileges of former Anglicans under the pledge in some parts of the Church. As the sense of oneness grows greater, the claim to distinguish between the ministries by members of the Church may become more distasteful, and a kind of moral pressure be felt, even if not intended, to accept all ministries alike for the sake of that sense of oneness. The limit to intercommunion set by the Anglican Communion, though foreshadowed, has been a disappointment to some.

Such considerations have led in the negotiations both in Ceylon and in North India to a desire for a unification of the ministry from the inauguration. The Lambeth Conference of 1948 tended to encourage such an attitude. I would say that Anglicans are especially anxious for this, but those of other denominations also are anxious for a ministry which can win the widest possible acceptance from the beginning, if that is possible without sacrifice of any principle on their part. The problems in this matter are more complex in North India than in Ceylon.

They do not appear insoluble in either. The means provided in Ceylon, as they stand, are capable of wide acceptance, if the temptation to prejudge, by too much definition, the possible action of the Holy Spirit in such a service of unification can be resisted.

It may be asked what the Church of South India is likely to say to such a step. Not much that can be construed as favourable comment has come from South India. This is important as the further hope must be that of a close relation between South India, Ceylon, North India and Pakistan in church order. If the schemes in Ceylon and North India come to successful fruition in this regard, we may have a ministry in these regions of wider acceptance than that of South India, which will complicate future relations. At present it seems too much to hope that the Church of South India would follow the other two by a unification of the ministry within it, and so lead to a ministry of the same degree of acceptance throughout the sub-continent and Ceylon.

### The Church as a Fact

Meanwhile, whatever may happen elsewhere, we have the Church of South India as an incontrovertible fact. At the top the union has gone forward in a remarkable and encouraging way in the short time since the inauguration. That it moves more slowly among the rank and file is to be expected, though from outside it is hard to say how far this may be so. There have been irreconcilable pockets, but since Coimbatore came in these have not been large, except for the Nandyal Area. Even there the augury of happier relations is better. The beginning, with Synodical sanction, of an order for women in South India is a sign for encouragement, and other means of binding the members of the Church more deeply in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may be expected.

The Church of South India is here, and a factor to be reckoned with in all considerations of Christians on the subject of union. Episcopal and non-episcopal elements have come together. What the future of such a factor may be is hard to discern. It has been both an encouragement and a discouragement to movement towards union elsewhere. As it is, full acceptance of it may be easier among non-episcopal Churches than such a church as the Anglican, though that is not easy for an Anglican to judge. It has been suggested that if union elsewhere is too slow in coming, here is an episcopal church from which others could obtain the episcopate, or with which others could join and so recover the episcopate without direct resort to union with the Anglican Communion, and so lead on to the kind of concordat between churches foreshadowed by the Archbishop of Canterbury's famous Cambridge Sermon. Such a course would lead to overlapping episcopal jurisdictions which would raise yet further problems, and it would need much consideration before it could be judged advisable.

Meanwhile in its internal and external policies the Church of South India must present an object of the closest interest and attention from the outsider. The members of this Church have taken a courageous step, and are set for a sign among us all.



# Problems of Church Union in North India

R. C. COWLING

Progress in Church Union negotiations in North India has been greatly accelerated during the past four years by two factors, the emergence of India and Pakistan as independent States, and the coming into being of the Church of South India. To these must be added a third factor which partly arises from the other two, a sense of impatience among a large section of the educated laity over the divisions which the churches of the West have brought to us. India and Pakistan wish for union at all costs, and it is evident that many of the Christians neither appreciate nor wish to be bothered with the theological arguments underlying the divisions. The weakness of this position is obvious. So long as political events in which India and Pakistan are involved continue to keep up the sense of urgency, so long will negotiations go forward, and if the pressure of events becomes too great it is possible that completely irreconcilable elements will be included in the constitution of the new church which will later prove a source of weakness. On the other hand, any relaxation in the urgency of the situation, or any increase in the volume of criticism of the C.S.I. will inevitably delay negotiations in the north. Indeed it may be said without any fear of contradiction that at the last meeting of the negotiating committee a certain resurgence of denominationalism was due to this.

In the Preamble to the Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan, it is declared that, 'The negotiating Churches, being inspired by the belief that the will of God for His Church is set forth in Christ's prayer "that all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" and being convinced that the situation in North India and Pakistan calls for practical unity in their Christian witness to the non-Christian world have prepared this basis for Church Union'. In this declaration there are two elements, the present situation and the will of God for His Church. If the negotiating churches are really motivated by the belief that it is the will of God that they should unite, then the negotiations are likely to reach a successful conclusion within a comparatively short time. But if the main reason for uniting is the pressure of events, and the members of the negotiating bodies wistfully regret the possible necessity for their churches merging into a united church, then negotiations may yet be long and unfruitful.

Engaged in the church union negotiations are such diverse bodies as the United Church of Northern India (Presbyterian and Congregational), the Church of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon (Anglican), the Methodist Church in Southern Asia, the Methodist Church (British and

Australian Conferences), and the Baptist churches connected with the British Baptist Missionary Society. Some of these churches are highly organized, others have little organization above the congregational level ; some have an elaborate discipline and a constitution which provides rules for every conceivable situation, others deliberately avoid such rules ; some have an episcopal system and lay great stress on episcopal ordination, others have a traditional suspicion of episcopal authority. One could continue this list of differences almost indefinitely, but enough has been said to show how difficult the task of the negotiators has been.

### **The Experience of the Church of South India**

It is true that the Church of South India had similar difficulties to face and has shown that they can be overcome, but in North India three problems are present which were either not present during negotiations in the south or have assumed greater importance since then. In the C.S.I. the question of episcopal ordination at the time of the initiation of the church was avoided. All recognized and ordained ministers of the uniting churches who signed the constitution of the united church were accepted as ministers of the C.S.I. whether they had been episcopally ordained or not. This no doubt made it easier for ministers of non-episcopal churches to join the united Church, but proved to be one of the main reasons why the Anglican Church is not at present willing to give full recognition to the C.S.I. In North India, as will be described later, an attempt has been made to work out a solution to this problem which, while not repugnant to other churches, will satisfy the Anglicans.

Secondly, in the C.S.I. only one of the uniting churches was episcopal in character, therefore no problem arose regarding the mutual recognition of the episcopates of the uniting bodies. In North India, the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon and the Methodist Church in Southern Asia are both episcopal in character, and the question of mutual recognition arises. This appears to be one of the most difficult problems of all.

Thirdly, in the North India negotiations the Baptist Churches connected with the British B.M.S. are taking part, whereas the Baptist Churches of the South did not join in negotiations. This has introduced problems connected with the sacraments and the nature of the church which did not have to be faced by the C.S.I.

In view of the many differences between the negotiating churches, the committee had early to distinguish between the different conceptions of unity and uniformity. One often reads as well as hears criticisms of the C.S.I. which are based on confusion between the two ideas. Church union does not necessarily mean that every presbyter must wear the same vestments, that worship in every church should be conducted along exactly the same lines, or even that exactly the same ritual should be used in celebrating the sacraments. Human beings vary greatly and some fit into one type of church background better than others. An attempt to produce uniformity savours too much of ecclesiastical totalitarianism, and any suggestion that even at some future date pressure would be brought to bear on churches to bring about uniformity would cause a breakdown in the negotiations. The Plan of Union has therefore allowed a great deal of liberty to the local congregations in matters of worship and church government, and states clearly that no change in



these matters may take place without the agreement of the Presbyter-in-charge and the congregation.

The essential unity of the uniting churches will rest in their common recognition of one another's ministries after the preliminary unification of the ministry, in acceptance of an episcopate that shall be both constitutional and historic, in acceptance of a common statement of faith, which is based on the scriptures and safeguarded by the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, and in recognition of all members of the uniting churches as members of the United Church. In preparing the plan, it has been recognized by the negotiators that many of the things that separate us are not theological but are really of man's devising. But there has been a great sense of tolerance and understanding, so that member churches are being permitted to retain much that they deem precious even though the other churches in some cases cannot see their way to accepting these things for themselves.

### **The Forging of a Plan**

It is not proposed in this article to describe or even summarize the Plan of Union. The Plan is available for study and a leaflet giving the important changes and additions made at the last meeting of the Negotiating Committee will also shortly be available. What is more interesting and profitable to us is, with the Plan before us, to notice the nature of the compromises that have been reached on some points of issue and ask ourselves whether they are likely to stand up to present criticism or the tests of practical working out when the church comes into being.

In the Plan of Union one of the most interesting and possibly one of the most debateable features is the initial unification of the ministry. This section of the Plan has been very carefully worded to allay the fears and suspicions of the various churches taking part. It says, 'The uniting Churches mutually acknowledge each other's Ministries as Ministries of Christ in His Word and Sacraments, although in our present state of division they cannot be regarded as fully representative. . . . The uniting Churches acknowledge that owing to their divisions, all their Ministries are limited in scope and authority, not having the seal of the whole Church. They therefore accept the principle of the unification of the Ministry by the mutual laying on of hands in a solemn act of humility and rededication with prayer. . . .'

'While recognizing that there may be different interpretations of this rite, deriving from different Church traditions, the uniting Churches agree that the use of this rite does not imply a denial of the reality of the ordination previously received by those now seeking to become Presbyters in the United Church ; it does not imply the replacement of that ordination by a new ordination, nor is it presumed to bestow again or renew any grace, gifts, character or authority that have already been bestowed through whatever means.'

Please note the phrase, 'while recognizing that there may be different interpretations of this rite, deriving from different Church traditions'. Whatever may be the opinions of the representatives of the non-episcopal churches regarding the purpose of this rite, it appears that, as at least three bishops of the present C.I.P.B.C. will take part in the unification

of the episcopate, and at least one bishop will take part in both the central and regional ceremonies for the unification of the ministry and will lay hands on the heads of the presbyters taking part, the Anglican Church may be prepared to regard such presbyters as coming within the requirements for a valid ministry of the Catholic Church. If so one obstacle in the way of recognition of the C.S.I. by the Anglican Church should not exist in the proposed United Church in the North.

It is well that the negotiating churches should realize clearly the implications of this. It is not merely that before this service a number of presbyters had received authority from God for the work of the ministry, but had only received local and temporal authority from a section of the church for this work, and that after the service they will have received authority from the whole of the united church to minister within all the churches of the united Church. That, no doubt, is the idea which the words of the Basis of Union are intended to convey, but to High Church Anglicans the service is likely to mean much more than this. They may feel that it will have the desirable result of converting a ministry that was not episcopally ordained into one that will be episcopally ordained. Whether even this will result in the full recognition of this ministry by the Anglican Church is uncertain in view of the fact that at the Lambeth Conference in 1948 a substantial minority of the bishops present and voting, when discussing the position, 'in regard to the bishops, presbyters and deacons consecrated and ordained in the Church of South India *at or after the inauguration* of that Church' held 'that it is not yet possible to pass any definite judgement upon the proper status of such bishops, presbyters and deacons in the Church of Christ or to recommend that they be accepted in the Anglican Communion as bishops, presbyters or deacons.' It is however clearly the hope of some Anglican negotiators that such recognition will be given.

What is underlying the attitude of many Anglicans in this matter is the fact that they have now full intercommunion with the small Old Catholic Church on the Continent and they have hopes of recognition from the Eastern Orthodox Church. They hesitate to take any action which might affect relations with these churches adversely.

### Problems Relating to the Anglican Church

Another interesting feature of the Basis of Union concerns the relation of the United Church to other churches. It is stated that, 'it is the intention of the uniting Churches that after union, full communion and fellowship shall be maintained with each of the several Churches with which any of them is now in communion, and the fact that any of these does not follow the rule of episcopal ordination will not preclude the united Church from holding relations of communion and fellowship with it. . . .' A similar provision occurs in the Basis of Union of the C.S.I. This has created difficulties for the Anglicans. They find it difficult to give full recognition to a church which maintains relations of intercommunion with non-episcopal churches.

Ever since 1908 correspondence and negotiations have been going on between the Swedish Church and the Anglican Church as to the possibility of establishing complete mutual recognition and intercommunion. The Swedish Church is episcopal in character, its episcopate



is historical with an unbroken succession, its ministry is in every way satisfactory according to Anglican standards, but it does not officially accept any theory of the episcopacy that prevents itself from being in communion with non-episcopal churches. This has so far been a bar to the establishment of full relations between the Anglican Church and the Swedish Church. The Swedish Church already does give communion freely to all members of the Church of England in good standing. The difficulty is not from their side.

This difficulty is still felt by the Anglican Church towards the Church of South India. The Derby Committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury has considered certain features of the constitution of the C.S.I. and states that certain changes in the constitution are in their opinion essential before full recognition can be given. One change that they consider necessary is that there should be reconsideration of the ultimate relation of the Church of South India at the close of the interim period to other churches not episcopally ordered.

If the Anglican Church should see its way clearly to having full relations of intercommunion with the Church of Sweden, one could hope that it would also be willing for a similar relationship with the United Church in North India, but if not, we must expect a recommendation that this provision of the constitution be changed, in the same way as is happening in the case of the C.S.I.

Another difficulty which has recently arisen in the course of the negotiations relates to the unification of the episcopate. It has been agreed that 'the episcopate of the united church shall be both constitutional and historic. By historic episcopate is meant the episcopate which is in historic continuity with that of the early church. No particular theological interpretation of episcopacy shall be demanded from any minister or member of the united church.' To Anglicans the establishment of a historical episcopate has been regarded as one of the four essentials in any united church with which they are connected, since the Lambeth Conference of 1888.

In North India the Methodist Episcopal Church is one of the negotiating bodies. This Church's bishops are consecrated at a service which appears to contemplate the creation of a separate order from that of the presbyters. But the first Methodist bishops were set aside for this work by John Wesley, who was himself a presbyter. It can be said that during the early days of the Church bishops were sometimes consecrated by presbyters, but this has not been the practice in most episcopal churches. So the question arises as to whether and to what extent the episcopate of the Methodist Episcopal Church can be regarded as historic. This question definitely affects the nature of the service for the unification of the episcopate. This may seem a small matter, but it is not. Here again one is face to face with the desire of the Anglicans to maintain the Catholic nature of the Church, which to them involves the historic episcopate, and they will not agree to any compromise that will endanger their present or future intercommunion with other Catholic churches.

To churches which have hitherto been unused to episcopacy and which may be rather suspicious of that form of church order and polity, it is essential that the powers of the bishops be clearly defined. It is understood by them that the term 'constitutional' as used in the Plan

of Union does indicate that their powers will be limited and defined. This does not mean that the bishops will merely carry out the wishes of the Church's committees, but it will ensure that they do not act in a high-handed way against the will of the Church as a whole. In the C.S.I. constitution, provision has been made for certain matters to be referred to the bishops by the synod for their opinion with this proviso that if the bishops refuse twice to submit an opinion on the matter, it may be taken up by the synod, passed by a two-thirds majority and then referred to the dioceses for their opinion. It is thus conceivable, although it is unlikely, that the church might vote against the majority of the bishops and carry its way.

The Derby Committee considers that there should be a modification of the rules of synodical procedure, clarifying and properly safeguarding the position of the bishops. The exact nature of the modification desired is not clear, but presumably it would be in the direction of extending the powers of the bishop and limiting the controls on the exercise of his authority. This is a matter which the negotiators in North India will have to go into very carefully. In the Plan of Union it is said that 'the Bishops shall perform their functions in accordance with the customs of the church, those customs being named and defined in the written constitution of the United Church'. At present however very little appears on this subject in the constitution. Does this mean that customs will develop and will later be inserted into the constitution or that the matter has not yet been taken up?

### **Problems Relating to the Baptist Church**

After mentioning so many difficulties that specially affect the Anglicans, it is as well to mention one concerning another denomination. It was not unexpected that when the Baptists re-entered negotiations they would ask for rewording of the section concerning baptism. They could not accept for themselves the statement that infant baptism is a 'sign of cleansing or engrafting into Christ and entrance into the covenant of grace'. They only agree to this in the case of those, 'to whom it is administered on the profession of the individual that he has been led by the grace of God into a conviction of his sinfulness, into repentance thereof, and into belief that God forgives and justifies him through faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour'. This does not mean, as some unfairly suggest, that Baptists, like the disciples of old, want to keep children from Christ's presence. It is rather a protest against the nominal Christianity that in India may result in Christians becoming merely another caste.

In view of this objection of the Baptists the section on Baptism as it appears in the printed Plan has been reworded to read as follows:—

- (1) Both infant baptism and believers' baptism shall be accepted as alternative practices in the United Church. Those who practice infant baptism and those who practice believers' baptism each believe that baptism as administered by them respectively is a sign of cleansing or engrafting into Christ, and entrance into the covenant of grace. They that are baptized are by this sacrament solemnly admitted into the family of God and engaged to be the Lord's. Full Christ-



ian initiation, however, is a process which is concluded only when the initiate participates for the first time in Holy Communion.'

It must be realized that the apparent agreement over the meaning and purpose of Baptism covers a very real theological difference. The Baptist negotiators apparently accepted this and felt that they could agree to work within a church which permits both these forms of Baptism, but it is almost certain that sooner or later this matter will have to be taken up again by the United Church. Possibly the disquiet that is being felt in many quarters in England and on the Continent concerning the whole question of Christian initiation, and the discussions that are taking place, will help in the solution of this problem.

The difficulties outlined above are all due to theological differences that exist in the West having been brought to India. There is one other obstacle to Church Union emanating from the connection with the churches of the West that is of a very different character. That is the question of financial support from the West. It is unfortunately true that many Missionary bodies which are prepared to support denominational activities abroad are not willing to help finance a united church. The result is that some Indian church leaders, although themselves in favour of Church Union, hesitate to vote for it. They know that if their Church ceased to toe the denominational line, funds from the West would dry up, and as they regard themselves as realists they hide their real thoughts and feelings. This is a very unfortunate state of affairs, but judging from the way political affairs and international relations are shaping, this is a matter that may decide itself all too quickly.

If connection with the Western Churches should become attenuated as sooner or later it undoubtedly will, it is hard to say what form will be taken by the United Church. It is certain that many of the difficulties mentioned above will just fade out. They are of the West and to most Indian church members and ministers they count for little. Perhaps it is in the purpose of God that through being thrown back on her own resources the Church in India should develop a church life of her own, which while differing from that of the churches of Europe and America will nevertheless provide an adequate vehicle for conveying the grace of Christ to India.



On the level of creation as a whole, Christian evangelism involves every activity in which Christians are engaged. Where the Christian is in his normal day-to-day work, there is the frontier of the Gospel as it confronts the world.

On the level of community, Christian evangelism involves making visible in the World, and making effective, that community which oversteps every barrier and in which the wholeness of the future is already realized in part. This is the Church.

On the level of the individual, Christian evangelism involves effecting that introduction between God and man which will bring him into relation with the saving activity of God.—Daniel T. Niles in *That They May Have Life*.

# The Syrian Church of Malabar

Its Contribution to the Church in India

C. E. ABRAHAM

## I

Whatever be the verdict of history upon the claim<sup>1</sup> made by the Syrian Church of Malabar to its apostolic foundation, there is little doubt that from the very early centuries of the Christian Era there was a small but flourishing community of Christians in the south-west corner of India. They were known to the world outside in the earlier centuries by different names, such as 'Thomas Christians' and 'Syrian Christians' and it is the descendants of this body of Christians that mostly constitute the present Syrian Church of Malabar. That Church is one of the smaller historic churches of Christendom. The vicissitudes it has passed through no less than the distinctive features of its church life give it a unique place among the churches in India. The land of Kerala consisting of the United State of Travancore-Cochin and the adjoining district of Malabar, the home of the Syrian Church of Malabar for several centuries past, has the distinction of being one of the few areas in India where the Christian Church reckoned as an integral part of the landscape counts for much in the life and outlook of the people as a whole, Christian as well as non-Christian. Christians in Travancore who form approximately a third of its population are by no means to be considered a negligible minority in that region as in certain other parts of India. We are however concerned in this article not so much with the Syrians as a community as with the Syrian Church, on the one hand in its relation to other churches, and on the other to the culture and traditions of the people of India among whom it has its existence.

The Syrian Church is a generic term describing a church which at one time existed as a single and undivided unit but which has since the 16th century been split up into different sections. In one sense therefore, it would be more correct in the circumstances that prevail today to speak of the Syrian Churches than of the Syrian Church. We shall however continue to speak of the church in the singular and treat the various sections as but branches of the one and the same tree.

Apart from the numerous body of the Syrians who pledged obedience to the Pope under political proselytizing pressure from the Church of

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<sup>1</sup> See *The South Indian Apostolate of St. Thomas*, by K. N. Daniel. Pub. Church History Association of India, Serampore. Price Rs.1/8/-.



Rome in the 16th century and who since then have been reinforced by converts of various Roman Missions from the West, there are the non-Roman Syrian Christians constituted at present into two main bodies, known popularly as the Jacobite<sup>1</sup> and the Mar Thoma<sup>2</sup> sections of the Syrian Church. The former is by far the larger section and embraces within it certain minor divisions including distinctive church groups such as the Independent Church of Thozhiyur in the District of Malabar and the Sudhist or the Knanaya<sup>3</sup> Church mainly found in Travancore. The main body of the Jacobites is threatened at present with a split over the question of the jurisdiction of the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch over the temporalities of the Church. Of the two parties who are engaged in fighting this out in the law courts, one swears unquestioning allegiance to the supremacy of the Patriarch, while the other stands for local autonomy in administration for the church in Malabar with a Catholicos at the head. The latter prefers to call itself the Orthodox Syrian Church—a name which they hold is the proper appellation for themselves and those who are championing the Patriarch's cause. The other party continues to call itself the Jacobite Syrian Church and insists on closer relations with the Patriarch of Antioch. It must be borne in mind, however, that as regards doctrine and dogma there is hardly any difference between the various sections of the Jacobite or the Orthodox Church. The Independent Church of Thozhiyur<sup>4</sup> stands in a class by itself. In point of doctrine and ritual it has spiritual affinity with the main stream of Jacobite thought while in the matter of order it maintains friendly relations with the Mar Thoma Church. Over against the Jacobite or the Orthodox section stands the Mar Thoma Church which is entirely independent of the See of Antioch and in point of doctrine has an emphasis that is evangelical, though in worship as well as in other matters it has much in common with other sections of the Syrian Church.<sup>5</sup> It may be added here in order to complete the picture that there are other sections of the Church in Kerala, such as the three dioceses of the Church of South India—North Kerala, Central Travancore and South Travancore—in which also, especially in the second there are varying proportions of Syrian Christians who at one time belonged to the Syrian Church.

## II

We may now proceed to discuss the subject of the contribution of the Syrian Church to the Church in India under the following four heads—Self-support, Evangelism, Social Action and Ecumenism.

<sup>1</sup> *The Orthodox (Jacobite) Syrian Church—Catholicos Party.* H.H. The Catholicos and 5 Bishops for 5 dioceses. Priests 300 (?), monks 7, Deacons 65, Parishes 400 (approximately), Sunday Schools 309, Religious Communities 3, Evangelistic Institutions 2.

*The Orthodox (Jacobite) Syrian Church—Patriarch's Party.* Priests 380, Deacons 55, Parishes 425, Monasteries 6, Theological Seminaries 6, Bishops 5.

Members of the above two Churches half-a-million approximately.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mar Thoma Syrian Church.* Metropolitan 1, Bishop 1, Parishes 346, Ministers 170, Members (approximately) 2 lakhs, Sunday Schools 540.

<sup>3</sup> *The Sudhist or the Knanaya Church.* Bishop 1, Parishes 27, Priests 33, Members 30,000.

<sup>4</sup> *The Malabar Independent Syrian Church, Thozhiyur, South Malabar.* Bishop 1, Parishes 6, Priests 4, Deacons 3, Members about 2,000.

*The Chaldaen Syrian Church (Trichur).* Priests 4, Deacons 7, Parishes 12, Members 12,000, Bishop 1.

<sup>5</sup> All the sections of the Syrian Church use a common liturgy—the liturgy of St. James—either in Syriac or in Malayalam.

(i) *Self-support*.—One of the things of which the Syrian Church may justly be proud is that in all its sections the Church is entirely self-supporting. It does not receive any foreign subsidy to carry on its work or to support its ministry. To churches planted by Western missions in other parts of India, which are in many cases still dependent on funds from the West, the phenomenon of a church that is purely indigenous and entirely self-supporting should prove to be a source of inspiration and encouragement. The chief sources of income for the Syrian Church are endowments in property, fees charged for spiritual ministrations and voluntary gifts. Some of these items may not commend themselves to those who do not believe in a cash nexus in the spiritual ministrations of the church. The Mar Thoma Church, it may be pointed out, had serious misgivings in this regard some years ago and as a result has now completely switched over to voluntary giving, abandoning the security that is provided by a system of compulsory payment of fees imposed by the church. When the change came the ministers were in sore straits for some time, but the people rose to the occasion and are now fully convinced of the rightness of the step that was taken and are consequently alive to their responsibilities. This shows that self-support can be achieved provided the incentives are there. The greatest incentive, of course, should be the conviction on the part of every member that his church is an instrument in God's hands for the salvation of men and that it is a privilege for him to take his share in equipping the church for this great task.

(ii) *Evangelism*.—The record of the Syrian Church over the centuries in the matter of evangelism is not one that reflects credit on itself or inspires much confidence in others. In this respect the experience of the Syrian Church may serve as a warning to other churches in India. Set in the midst of an overwhelmingly non-Christian population, the Church began to adjust itself to its environment and did it so perfectly that the edge of its missionary obligation was blunted beyond recognition. The members of the Church were concerned more with their social standing than with the obedience to the Master's last command. The result was that the Syrian Christians were for many centuries not only indifferent to evangelism but did hardly consider it as a part of their Christian duty and privilege. Contact with Western Missions, particularly the C.S.M. and the L.M.S. who started work in Travancore in the early decades of the 19th century has brought about a welcome change in the outlook of the Syrian Church. Educational institutions also like the Madras Christian College, Serampore College and Bishop's College, Calcutta, deserve honourable mention in this connection. We find today certain sections of the Syrian Church actively engaged in evangelistic work both in and outside Travancore. The Orthodox Church has three ashrams under its auspices—two in Travancore and one at Tadagam in Coimbatore District and all three are active centres of evangelistic work. A missionary order<sup>1</sup> founded in 1924 by a graduate of Serampore College has been the means of bringing into the Orthodox Church as many as 19,000 converts from the backward communities within the last 28 years. The Mar Thoma Church awakened earlier to

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<sup>1</sup> The order of the Servants of the Cross founded by Remban M. P. Petros of Cochin.



its missionary obligation, founded an evangelistic association in 1888, and has been carrying on vigorous missionary work in and outside Travancore during the last fifty years. It is associated very closely with the National Missionary Society of India, and has several ashrams and mission fields, in which the devotion and zeal of its young men and women is much in evidence. There is a group of young men who are at present planning a mission to Nepal, a land where the preaching of the Gospel is still forbidden. While there is much to admire in the self-sacrificing devotion to the missionary cause on the part of some zealous members belonging to the present generation of the Syrian Church, it must in all humility be admitted that the Church cannot be said to have developed any new technique or made an outstanding contribution in any way to the evangelistic task of the Church in India. But it has proved an excellent imitator and any special contribution it has made may perhaps be found in its wholehearted espousal of the ashram method of evangelism. Another thing that may be mentioned in this connection is the witness of a dedicated life illustrated by some of the illustrious sons of the Syrian Church such as Mar Gregorias, Bishop, ascetic and saint, Sadhu Kochunju, ascetic and preacher, Bishop Abraham, preacher and leader in evangelism, and K. C. Chacko, Professor and a man of prayer, faith and vision.

(iii) *Social Action*.—The Syrian Church, like other long-established churches, has in the past generally been identified with vested interests, more perhaps through inertia than of deliberate choice. But in recent years, partly as a result of the national movement for political freedom under Gandhiji's leadership and partly as a result of a renewed study of the Bible, the challenge of social justice has stirred hitherto slumbering consciences and made them sensitive to the exploitation of man by man in the economic and social spheres of life. Customs and practices which were once taken for granted are now being questioned, and in many cases abandoned. The Prohibition Movement, the Peace Movement associated with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Movement for Communal Harmony have found able and convinced advocates amongst the members of the Syrian Church and have made some headway in areas in Kerala where the leaders as well as the rank and file of the church members have caught a new vision of the Kingdom of God and have come into intimate personal contact with Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour as the result of a spiritual revival in the Church. The famous Maramon Convention under the influence of speakers like Dr. G. Sherwood Eddy in earlier years and Dr. Stanley Jones at the present time has been a great force in emphasizing the social application of Christian principles. To take a recent instance, at the last meeting of the Maramon Convention held in February, 1952, at the instance of Dr. Jones, a seven-point programme was adopted, which when implemented, is sure to bring about a great change in the social habits and practices of the people. Not only social service and social reform but social action, too, on the basis of Christian principles has been envisaged by some of the progressive forces in the Syrian Church.

In this connection the work of the Youth Christian Council of Action associated with the Christavasram at Manganam, Kottayam, deserves honourable mention. This group consisting of a few keen Christian young men and women was called into being in the dark days im-

mediately before Independence (1947) when a Dewan of the State of Travancore proved to be a veritable nightmare for the Church in this small state. The Y.C.C.A. promotes the study of social and economic problems facing the Church and the country, and tries to organize public opinion along constructive Christian channels. It has conducted surveys on 'caste', 'dowry' and 'litigation' within the Christian community and has thereby focussed attention on these evils. 'The Council has been striving' in the words of its General Secretary, 'to bring home to the Christian community the message of Jesus that in political or in any other field the only way to save its life is to lose itself in the service of others—not in seeking its own rights and privileges'. The Y.C.C.A. may not have many achievements to its credit so far, but the very fact of its existence is full of promise for the Church in Kerala. It is a standing challenge to the social conscience of the Church in Malabar.

(iv) Lastly, it remains for us to see what the attitude of the Syrian Church is in regard to the problem of Ecumenism. From the fact that the Syrian Church of Malabar has been brought into contact with various churches, Eastern and Western, in the course of its long history, and yet remained geographically far removed from the scenes of the theological battles of the church in general, we may expect that Church to be in a favourable position to act as a bridge between churches and denominations which have been pulled asunder by the accident of history or geography. Such expectations may also be strengthened by the thought that the Syrian Church in a heroic moment of its history marshalled all its forces and stoutly resisted the claims of the Roman hierarchy to order the Church about in the matter of faith and order. The reference, of course, is to the famous Coonen Cross declaration of 1653, a declaration that is on a par with some of the Western manifestoes against Papal autocracy. The Church then stood unequivocally for its autonomy, and if the Decrees of the Synod of Diamper (1599) are any guide, one may add, also, for a faith that was evangelical without being sectarian and catholic without being Roman. Much water has flowed under the bridge since 1653 and it is little wonder if the Syrian Church today does not stand where it did three centuries ago. The Church is now divided and sub-divided into various groups and it is not surprising that she cannot speak with one voice in regard to questions of faith and order.

In order to be realistic in our approach to the problem of ecumenism, it is necessary that we should look at the relations between the different sections of the Syrian Church on the one hand and their relation to the churches outside on the other. With regard to the former, it is sufficient for our purpose to consider the relations between the Orthodox Church and the Mar Thoma Church, leaving out of account the minor sections in the Orthodox or the Jacobite Church. These two churches have passed through various stages of mutual relationship, which in diplomatic language may be described as belligerency, armed neutrality, and correct diplomatic behaviour. It must, however, be borne in mind that individuals and groups on either side have proved that spiritual fellowship is not always conditioned by the official policies of their churches. The founding of the Alwaye Union Christian College in 1921 as a venture of faith on the part of a group of friends belonging to the Orthodox and the Mar Thoma Churches, together with an Anglican missionary, raised



great hopes towards Christian unity in Travancore. These hopes were raised to a higher pitch when representatives of the churches came together in the thirties to discuss points of agreement as well as of difference between their churches with a view to promoting closer co-operation. But for various reasons the negotiations were broken off. The present position is that one of the parties—the Anglican Church in Travancore and Cochin—is an integral part of the Church of South India, and the Orthodox and the Mar Thoma Churches are much in the same position as they were about a quarter of a century ago. While there is no open rivalry between them or mutual recrimination as there existed at one time, it would be rash to say that these two Churches are working together with the utmost harmony and goodwill.

This may seem rather strange when ecumenism is in the air all over the world. It is true that representatives of the Orthodox and the Mar Thoma Churches fraternize with one another when they meet in Amsterdam, Lund or Geneva. Yet it is also true that the two Churches have not appreciably come any nearer by participation in ecumenical gatherings. There are many reasons which might explain this strange phenomenon. First of all, there is the reason that is contained in Mr. Oliver Tomkins' observation about trans-confessional trends. He says, 'It is a notable fact of recent ecumenical history that, partly because they began to know something about other people, many traditions have become much more sharply aware of themselves. . . . In differing degrees, churches which had little troubled to do so before are organizing themselves on a world-wide confessional basis'.<sup>1</sup> The Orthodox Church thinks that its primary duty is to foster closer union with churches in the Near East than with its neighbours next door. Secondly, the isolation in which the Syrian Church found itself for centuries has unfortunately left a legacy of stagnation and mental apathy, and it is not easy to exorcise this spirit from its policies and programmes. Thirdly, there is the weakness of internal divisions in the Jacobite Church and preoccupation with purely domestic issues. Fourthly, there is a lack of knowledge and appreciation of the theological standpoint of one's own church as well as of others so that preconceived notions of supposed correctness of dogma or practice are preferred to the give and take of theological discussions. Both the Orthodox and the Mar Thoma Churches should realize that neither orthodoxy nor evangelicalism is the monopoly of either. They should both have the humility to recognize that 'Evangelicalism is the salt of Catholicism, which purifies it and quickens it: Catholicism is the leaven of Evangelicalism, which enriches it and humanises it.' Alignment with influential churches of the same pattern is also a temptation that constantly faces smaller churches in all ecumenical circles. The chief reason, however, in the present writer's opinion, is a lack of earnest conviction about and concern for the ultimate objectives for which a church stands. If the churches in Malabar or elsewhere in India realize that the evangelization of India is their supreme duty it is bound to influence their attitude to other bodies engaged in the same task. In that case they could recognize in their supposed rivals, partners in the same heroic enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver Tomkins: *The Church in the purpose of God*, S.C.M. Press (1950), pp. 44-45.

We may now look at the relations to other church groups in India of these two churches, the Orthodox Church and the Mar Thoma Church. In modern times the Orthodox Church has shown great interest in promoting friendly relations with several Eastern Churches and it is now in communion with the Armenian, Coptic and Ethiopian Churches. Among Western churches the High Anglican section of the Church of England is, perhaps, the only branch of the Church Universal that enjoys the confidence of the Orthodox Church: yet even here it comes short of intercommunion officially approved by both Churches. The Orthodox Church is not a constituent member of the Christian Council of India, though its representatives are often invited as visitors to attend meetings of the Council. One wonders whether ecumenism like charity should not begin at home! With regard to the Mar Thoma Church it may be said that its autonomy and compactness have made it easier for the Church to enter into friendly relations with other churches. In 1937 there was established 'a measure of limited and partial intercommunion' between the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon and the Mar Thoma Church. Though the Church has not officially considered the question of organic union with other churches one gathers the impression that it is not likely to disapprove of any such union on the basis of what is known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. The Mar Thoma Church works in full co-operation with other churches in the National Christian Council and the National Missionary Society of India.

To sum up, the record of the Syrian Church in the field of ecumenism has not been an impressive one, nor is it likely to improve unless the different sections of the Church are converted to a new point of view as a result of the impact of new forces operating in the world today. Its isolationism must go and with it much of its mediaevalism on the one hand and revivalism on the other. It must turn its eyes outward and begin to realize the immensity of the task of the Christianization of India which is its God-given destiny. It must set its own house in order, not by perfecting its organization but by laying hold on spiritual values and by placing the interests of the Kingdom of God first and foremost in all its calculations and decisions. When it becomes aware of the problems confronting it—social, economic and ecumenical—it will naturally develop a sense of proportion about the values it should conserve and be able to look at ecumenism in a new light.

### III

The Syrian Church is a church with great potentialities. It is an indigenous church and is deeply rooted in the cultural soil of India. Its emphasis on worship, the simplicity of living of the rank and file of its members, the loyalty that it is able to evoke in them, the sacrifices that its youth is prepared to make in its service, as shown in educational and evangelistic enterprises, its independence, the record for integrity of character that some of its members have established in the service of the State—all these are great assets which can be made to pay high dividends for the Kingdom of God in India. But on one condition only. The Church must first wake up. It must get a new vision of its destiny in the purpose of God and be prepared to surrender immediate gains and little triumphs of factions and parties in the interest of wider



conquests for the Master and His Kingdom. How will the Syrian Church respond to this challenge of the hour? Much depends on the way the youth of the Church looks at the Church and her Master. Is the Cross of Christ to the Christian young man and woman today an irrelevance in the context of world problems, or a shield for defence and shelter, or a trumpet call to action? The church awaits the answer and so does the Master.



Blessed François frequently said that the duty most important to every good Christian is constantly to be seeking to perfect himself in his own natural calling. In other words, he should perform all the duties of his calling more and more perfectly. Now the perfection of each person's calling consists in properly adapting means to their end—that is, using one's own special vocation and its conditions to cultivate that love which is the essential and true perfection of Christianity, without which all else is nothing. God's glory, which is our ultimate end, can only be attained through charity. Always think of St. Paul's words: 'Above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.' Charity is not only the bond binding us to God, our true perfection, but it is also the bond whereby all graces are woven together and united to their one source, God and His glory.—Jean Pierre Camus in *The Spirit of St. François de Sales*.



Those who work with a single heart unto God find joy and strength and pleasure in their efforts. Even those who are not allowed to do what they crave can hear in the prison of circumstance a midnight song of deliverance. For working unto God always constitutes a light burden and an easy yoke. When work is worship God transfigures every task with His own presence, and the pay envelope occasions no protest. The New Testament can teach us this. Some speak of that book as reactionary, that it accepts the status quo, even slavery. How much deeper is its message. Personal attitudes in work and social relations will both be transformed, not through coercives of legislation nor even through social pressure, but mainly through an indwelling grace which transforms every circumstance and every relation, the master and the slave becoming brothers of each other in the Lord. Christianity does not mean the doing away with legitimately different economic functions. These are necessary to organized industry. But Christianity brings true democracy and the true sharing of the products of labour because of its spirit of common concern under God with whom there is no respect of person. A pity it is that most people consider this spiritual and social democracy as merely a beautiful theory. Nothing can more surely bring in the classless and raceless society as a real attitude than the Christian faith in actual practice.—Nels F. S. Ferré in *Strengthening the Spiritual Life*.

# Prospects of Evangelism in India

JOHN W. SADIQ

The prospects of evangelism in India, as in any part of the world, may be considered from two points of view. We can look at them from the perspective of the eternal purpose of God, in which the Gospel is believed to be God's answer to man's essential need which he must sooner or later discover, and in which the goal of history is to 'sum up all things in Christ'. Such a conception, and consequent hope, need no special reference to geographical location, historical development, present situation, or the state of the church. Or we can consider the prospects of evangelism from the point of view of these very factors. It is from this latter point of view that we are going to consider the prospects of Evangelism in India.

## The Background

Though India was several thousand miles away from the birthplace of Christianity, within a generation after our Lord's Resurrection, the Gospel seems to have reached her shores. If the tradition is to be believed—and the balance of probability is heavily in its favour—exactly nineteen hundred years ago, the Apostle Thomas first preached the Gospel in our land and established a church. No one can doubt that the church has been in existence in India for at least sixteen hundred years. That the Gospel reached the shores of India so early is the evidence both of her religious attraction and the adventurous and consecrated zeal of the early Christians.

The late Canon W. E. S. Holland has, in his book, *The Goal of India*, pointed out that India has been the religious mother of half mankind. She has given birth to four living religions, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, and has extended hospitality to three others, namely, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. This fact alone gives her a significance and importance which no history of civilization can underrate or bypass. It is also to be noted that during at least the first two thousand years of her known history, her religious development is the main texture of her culture and civilization. Her religious quest is not yet over. No other country can show a book such as the late J. N. Farquhar wrote on *Modern Religious Movements in India*, and the book is already out of date!

Unfortunately, the religious development of India instead of moving towards ethical monotheism, as happened in Judaism, took a turn towards pantheistic monism, and this has had grave consequences for the religious thinking of Hindu India. Dr. P. D. Devanandan, in an article



contributed to *World Dominion* entitled 'Evangelism in a Renascent India', has summarized these consequences as four: 'One is that Ultimate Reality is essentially unknowable . . . . The second basic affirmation is that no one theological formulation about the nature of the Ultimate Reality can claim absolute validity. All religions are equally true (and equally false); the exclusive claim of any one religion cannot be regarded as valid. . . . The third basic affirmation of Hinduism is that, since all religions are only partially true, it is possible that if one accepts many different interpretations of God and Reality, believing in the essential truths for which they separately stand, the sum total of partial truths will certainly be more than the partial truth affirmed by any one religion. . . . Fourthly, Hinduism recognizes the right of every Hindu to accept and practise whatever way of life he may find useful to his way of thinking and his peculiar social circumstances.' This way of thinking has resulted in a kind of vague religious universalism and its corollary, religious syncretism—two serious problems which the preaching of the Gospel has constantly to encounter.

Buddhism and Jainism sprang up as 'protestant' movements within Hinduism. Jainism has not made much headway except in claiming a few hundred thousand adherents among whom are some of the wealthiest merchants. Buddhism though driven out of the country by Brahmanism, has found deep roots in the soil of Far Eastern countries, especially in Burma and Ceylon, where it is being revived under the guise of nationalism. Buddhism is entering India from a back door, and the enthusiasm it has evoked in Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the 'untouchables', is a factor not to be overlooked.

Sikhism, born out of military necessity to oppose the fanatic onslaught of Islam, has lost its spiritual vigour, and a strong section of it has taken on a political colour and is now claiming 'a place in the sun'.

Islam came with the freshness and vigour of a conquering faith. With its monotheism and consequent iconoclastic zeal, it made rapid headway, but except for a large number of conversions in the wake of political conquests, and some indirect influences on the social and cultural life of India, it has made little impact on the Hindu mind. Islam and Hinduism have, for the most part, remained like oil and water. Any attempt at synthesis, such as made by Akbar the Great through his *Din i Ilahi*, or through mysticism such as that represented by the rustic poet Kabir, or, in modern times, such as that made by the Theosophical Society, have not met with any appreciable success. The establishment of Pakistan is a direct consequence of the lack of understanding between Hinduism and Islam. There are, however, two legacies, good and bad, which Islam has left on the soul of India. Islam has always stood for the missionary character of religious truth. It has no use for the point of view summarized by Dr. Devanandan in the quotation above. And we cannot belittle the contribution of Islam in securing in the Constitution of India the freedom not only to profess and practise but also to propagate religion. But, on the other hand, Islam has also brought with it a spirit of intolerance. Not that Hinduism has always been free from such a spirit—the treatment of the Buddhists by Brahmins would belie that—but on the whole the Hindu mind tends towards tolerance and a kind of religious universalism as

we have seen. The reaction to this religious intolerance can be seen in such Hindu movements as the Hindu Mahasabha or the Rashtra Swayam Sangh. This intolerance is not now confined to Hinduism's relation with Islam but has extended itself to Christianity. An English Weekly called *The Organizer* published from Delhi containing violent attacks on Islam and Christianity, serves as an example of this attitude.

Before we come to the state of the Christian Church in India, we must touch briefly on the political, social and economic factors which in the present century have assumed growing importance.

The political struggle for independence has made India politically awakened. The achievement of freedom and her strategic position in the international world, have brought a political consciousness which is fraught with important consequences. Socially, the Hindu Caste system has played a part which is nothing less than a social crime in history. The impact of education and contact with the outside world in the realm of thought has produced a dilemma as to how the movements of social progress and the age-long traditions of Hindu society are to be reconciled. Economically, poverty has been the inheritance of the vast majority of people to this day—India is a rich land where poor people abound! Of all the problems which the Free India has to tackle the problem of poverty is the most serious as well as urgent.

In the meantime a new factor has entered the scene—Communism. This is no place to dilate upon the good and evils of Communism. One thing is clear, that it has presented another dilemma to the heart and mind of India. She is still incorrigibly religious, but she is hungry for a social order in which justice would be done to the underdog. This dilemma is the travail of her soul which we must recognize if we are to do justice to the spiritual and mental struggle through which she is passing today.

What about The Christian Church? The history of the church in India is a history of successes and failures, and we must look at both to evaluate her strength with reference to the task which God has committed to her. We can do no more than barely mention some points on both sides.

The Christian Church, Roman and non-Roman, claims today about nine million Christians in India and Pakistan. The vast majority of these have come from very poor social, economic and religious background, though in many parts of India, particularly in Madras and Travancore, there are exceptions to this. This fact is both an asset and a liability, asset because it is an evidence of the transforming power of Christ (and have not the 'mass movement' Christians by the witness of their lives drawn the caste people to the church?) and liability, because their nurture and development involves leadership which the church does not possess.

The deeds of mercy through such enterprises as hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, have not only spoken in vivid terms of the love of compassion of the Master, but have provided inspiration and pioneering experiment for Government as well as private efforts. Through social work, organizations like the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. have rendered similar service and inspiration. The educational enterprise has been one of the most potent factors in leavening the thinking and conduct of a vast number of non-Christian people who have come within its influence.



But in these enterprises there has been the danger of rationalizing social service as a half-way evangelism or *preparatio evangelica*, while in actual effect the results do not justify such a conclusion.

The Church in India has not developed adequate self-support. Its dependence on financial assistance from abroad has had good and bad consequences. It has enabled her to carry out work on a scale and at a standard which is not insignificant. It has also maintained an ecumenical link with the church abroad. But on the other hand, it has made it an object of suspicion and derision in the eyes of non-Christians. It has produced a standard which is unrealistic, and worst of all, it has retarded in the church the process of self-expression and aspiration after a pattern of its own.

But by far the greatest handicap is the disunity of the church. Disunity not only produces duplication which the church in India cannot afford, but it weakens the reconciling witness of the church and brings it under subjection to traditions and modes of worship which are exotic and which have little relevance to the spiritual needs of the country.

### Prospects for the Future

In considering the future, we must once again remember the two points of view mentioned at the outset. India with her religious sensitiveness must sooner or later find the satisfaction of her spiritual hunger in Jesus who is 'the Bread of Life'. But we are concerned at the moment with the immediate future in the context both of the present situation in the country and of the church to whom is committed the task of evangelizing her.

We shall first mention some of the outstanding opportunities for the Gospel at the present time, some signs of new life in the church, and conclude with making some suggestions as to the principles which need to be kept in mind in tackling this great and glorious task.

The first observation that we should make is this. The political freedom of India has brought about a situation which is nothing short of revolutionary. This does not mean merely the protection of the fundamental religious rights in the Constitution, although that fact is of no small significance. It means, rather, the attitude of the Hindu India to Christianity. Of course India has always had a deep respect for our Lord. But on the whole it will be true to say that the prejudice which apparent association of Christianity with a ruling power had engendered is fast disappearing. It is interesting, for instance, to note the progress of leaflet and newspaper evangelism. In Nagpur on Good Friday this year, a leaflet entitled 'The Cross' was distributed throughout the city as part of an evangelistic campaign on the streets and in the homes. Copies of the leaflet were supplied to some of the local papers. One English daily reproduced the entire leaflet, another published a faithful summary, and a Hindi paper published a long reference.

Or to take another kind of instance, a Christian Governor can today give a personal witness to his faith in Christ at an official or public gathering and the public listens to him with appreciation and admiration.

Next we must mention a new interest in the Gospel on the part of the intelligentsia. While it is not possible to quote figures, I believe it will be true to say that the last five years, since independence, there

have been more converts and enquirers from among the educated classes than in any other five years since the beginning of the modern missionary enterprise in India. Among those who are eagerly studying the Bible through correspondence courses there is a large number of university students. And, of course, there are many who have found the anchorage of their faith in Christ but who have not clearly understood the relevance of the organized church. Dare we blame them altogether?

There have been in the recent years some significant 'caste movements' towards Christianity, particularly in the Telugu area and in the Uttar Pradesh. The problem has been how to find teachers for those who are seeking instruction.

The Muslims, finding themselves in a new situation, are having to prove the sustaining power of their own faith. The last few years have seen some outstanding conversions from among the educated Muslims. In the Uttar Pradesh the movement among 'Rajput Muslims' is a striking phenomenon. It can be said without fear of contradiction that the Muslims are today more open to the influence of the Gospel than they have ever been since the advent of Islam in this country.

Another significant movement worth mentioning is that among women and housewives. Some of them are no more 'secret disciples' but have come out into the open, and their relatives or husbands, though at first averse, are now following their footsteps or cheerfully conniving. Large number of instances can be cited from South India.

Among the tribal people, the march of Christianity goes on. Assam continues to gather a rich harvest for the faith. Some States where preaching of the Gospel was not possible under the old regime have now been opened to the Gospel. Even Nepal is gradually opening its doors. Faith is removing mountains!

One other fact must be mentioned. The growing influence of Communism has caused grave concern in many parts of the Christian world. Personally I am not terribly exercised about it. In this connection the following points must be remembered: first, the religious sensitivity of the Indian people (I say this in spite of the apparent secular outlook of the vast majority of educated people) and second, the challenge which Communism brings in regard to social and economic justice. It is not surprising to find a considerable number of Christian youth having Communist sympathies. Not all of them have renounced the Christian faith. Some who had actually joined the Communist party have even come back into the fold of the church. We must remember that many fine serious Christian young men and women are having to face the paradox so beautifully portrayed by our Lord in the parable of the two sons, one who said that he would go into the vineyard and did not go, and the other who refused to go, but actually went. We must not forget that the ideals of social justice, equality of opportunity appeal to the young mind, and when it fails to find in the church a deep concern for them, it revolts. There is another angle from which we must look at this question. Let us remember that God in His providence can use unexpected agencies to stab his people awake. The Cyrus of old in relation to the people of Israel is not the only example. Finally, Communism, as we have seen, raises the issue of social justice. An educated non-Christian is moved by the challenge. His religious heritage makes him look into his own religion to find 'a moral equivalent'



to Communism, and he finds none. But where the church has been the church, he is drawn to it and to the spiritual power behind it. Bishop Pickett not long ago referred to some university students in Delhi who frankly confessed that the real issue was between Christianity and Communism, and therefore they wanted to know something about Christianity.

I hope enough has been said to indicate that the prospects of evangelism are not only bright but challenging. But is the church adequate for the task? As we looked at the state of the church, perhaps we felt depressed. It must, however, be remembered that our sufficiency is of God, and we believe the Christian enterprise is His enterprise. Its future is fortunately not in our hands. But we must thank God for many signs of vitality in the church today. The missionary concern is growing. The Church of South India is a living manifestation of the evangelistic concern. It had become concerned with lands outside India and has already sent a missionary to Papua. The Lutheran Church has a missionary in Indonesia. The United Church of Northern India has had a missionary in Africa, and plans are afoot for sending more Indian missionaries. The National Missionary Society has broken new grounds in some of the erstwhile closed states. The border of Nepal is being gradually penetrated. Perhaps the most significant movement is seen among groups of young men and women, especially in Travancore, who are looking for fields which they can evangelize through community living and its missionary outreach. The evangelistic potentiality of the Ashram movement and that of itinerant preaching are being discovered afresh. This is only a gleaning from a rich harvest. There are many other signs of a new evangelistic concern in the church today.

If 'the stupendous task', to use the phrase given by those who initiated the movement of church union in South India, is to be accomplished, certain actions are obviously called for:

(a) Deepening of the spiritual life of Christian people. It is only as we 'come' closer to Christ that we hear His constraining call to 'go' and make disciples. The church in all its local manifestations must think out ways and means of meeting this need for revival and renewal.

• (b) The lay forces of the church must be mobilized. Dr. Emil Brunner has called the present age an age of the lay Christian, not because the lay people are doing all that they should, but because of the opportunity and the obligation which are theirs in the evangelistic mission of the church.

(c) Within the lay forces of the church the place of youth is strategic. Young people are ready for adventure, otherwise why should Communism claim so many of them? It is a pity that the Student Volunteer Movement in the West has lost its place, perhaps for reasons which we in a different context cannot appreciate. But that there is a place for some such movement in India cannot be doubted. Thank God the S.C.M. is making an effort to revive it. But must it be confined to university students? What about the rural youth and rural evangelism?

(d) Our homes must be Christianized in order that they may be like a city set on a hill. In days to come the 'Mission Compound' isolation will have to be broken. In such a situation their silent witness will become an eloquent testimony.

(e) The importance of literature cannot be overemphasized in this new day of hunger for books and reading material. Literature is needed both for the nurture of the Christians and for evangelistic outreach. Much lip service is paid to literature but this 'handmaid of the church' continues to receive poor treatment.

(f) The church must tackle the problems of social and economic justice within its sphere of influence, and show an active concern for this in the country through study and fearless pronouncements where called for, if her voice is to be respected and her message is to ring with challenging relevance.

(g) India is too much for a divided Church. The days of academic discussion on church reunion are over. We cannot continue to be dictated to by considerations, however deep rooted historically they may be, which are not relevant to the situation in our land. We must be dictated to only by the behest of the Lord who prayed that they might be one . . . . so that the world might believe.

The prospects of evangelism in India can be expressed in no better words than those given by the Master Himself, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few'. We must therefore in conformity to His injunction pray—wrestle with God—that He may send labourers, many and more adequate, into His harvest.



But a missionary especially from one land to another must also take account of the freedom of the Church. He must beware lest he confuse the Christian culture of his country with the Gospel. The Gospel is seed which, when it is sown in the soil of a country's life, brings forth a plant. The plant is Christianity. It bears the marks both of the seed and of the soil. There is only one Gospel, but there are many Christianities, many cultural forms in which men express their Christian faith. It is inevitable that the missionary should bring a pot plant, the Christianity of his own culture; it is essential that he allows the pot to be broken and the plant to be rooted in the soil of the country to which he goes. 'For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake' (II Cor. 4:5) that is the missionary ideal. Perhaps another word, with respect to the calling of the missionary, may not be out of place here; a word just to emphasize the desirability of the missionary calling being looked upon as a calling to serve a people and not only as a calling to do a particular work. It should not be possible for a missionary to speak too easily of leaving one country and going to another.—Daniel T. Niles in *That They May Have Life*.



# Theology for a Missionary Church

S. KULANDRAN

More than forty years ago P. T. Forsyth uttered a strong protest against the fairly wide-spread belief that theology has no necessary place in Christianity. He said that an undogmatic Christianity and purely human, mystical, subjective kind of Christ might be cherished for one's self or an audience, but that it could not be preached by the church of the ages. Both in the West and in the East there is an idea that theology is irrelevant to true religion and that ministers who occupy themselves with it could be far better engaged in giving their attention to more pressing problems. 'Practical' sermons are often far better appreciated than theological sermons.

Some years ago I was greatly concerned about the lack of attention paid by a certain Missionary Society to the religious side of missionary work. I thought it was mere unconscious neglect. About that time a book was published called *Re-Thinking Missions* and I became aware that behind the attitude of the missionaries was a definite theology. Soon after this came Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World* and I realized that I was a witness to the strife of two rival theologies for the soul of the missionary movement. There was a theology behind the rise of the missionary movement at the end of the eighteenth century. There was a theology behind the actions of missionary societies twenty or thirty years ago; and there is a theology behind the reorientation of missionary activities after the Tambaram Conference of 1938. There always is a theology behind us. We do not become non-theological by paying no attention to our theology.

Fortunately theology is not *logos Theou*, the word of God. It is a human word, not a divine word. It is man's word about God. It is *sermo de divinitate* not *sermo divinus*. Theology will bear obvious traces of the time and place in which it takes shape, of particular intellectual trends that are current when it rises and even of the special bent of the great mind that gives it to us. But a theology has serious responsibilities. Not any word about God can pretend to be theology. It has been demanded that it should be of God, from God, in His presence and for His glory. Because theology is human it does not mean that every theology is sound. Algebra and physics are human sciences but not every system of algebra or physics is right. I cannot form my own system in either of these sciences and insist that it is right. Theology may depend on many factors but we must see that the theology behind our actions is sound.

In one sense we may not perhaps speak of a theology for a missionary Church. It may be said that theology cannot be made to order ; that it is in the economic sphere that supply can be made to suit demand ; and that a theology is the matrix of a movement in the Church and not its product. But a theology is both a matrix and a product. A theology may give birth to a movement and movement may give birth to a theology. A theology may move us and we may be moved to a theology.

### **The Necessity for a Theology**

The Church in India arose from a theology and exists because of a theology. But it must also proceed to a theology. A Church that refuses to theologize is not merely abdicating one of its functions, it is refusing to accept the very principle of its life. Expression is the answer to the challenge of environment. The Church has been called by God ; it exists on Him ; it exists for Him. It must think and speak about Him in the environment in which it exists. The moment it does this it is theologizing.

Much of the prejudice against theology may go if it is realized that there has been a lot of unconscious theology already produced in India. Theology does not cease to be itself because it has not been named or known as such. It is scarcely possible for a church to have been in a country for more than two centuries without its producing some sort of theology, that is, without the members of that church thinking and speaking and writing as Christians on subjects that have come within its purview as a church. If such a theology was produced by persons of a limited outlook and insufficient knowledge, it may be defective and even distorted. If it did not attempt to think things through it may be fragmentary ; but it will still be theology if it has taken up consistent positions upon the subjects treated. However no church can depend upon such theology to draw from in its work.

The first task that must be undertaken by a church like that in India in the discharge of its theological responsibility is the proper education of the prospective theologian. The theologian must be a person of a deeply consecrated spirit. No one may be willing to be denied the right to a theology though not everyone may always put the right to conscious use. However, only a person who is spiritually at home in the things he speaks about can be allowed by the church to expound its theology. But a Theologian must also be a person who, to say the least, will not get lost along the intellectual highways of the world. Besides this he must also be a person who can think in terms of his environment. While the State has in recent years begun to remodel its system of education on the basis of a closer relation to environment, our theological colleges are slower in recognizing the need for doing this. After all, the chief agencies charged with shaping our prospective theologians are the theological colleges. They should give high priority to two tasks in their programmes, viz: establishing or strengthening post-graduate departments and relating their syllabus to our environment.

### **Differences in Approach**

Writing some years ago, Dr Kraemer said that ' the Christian Church in both the West and the East is virtually confronted with the same



fundamental problem'. His point was that the West had been getting so rapidly secularized that the church stood in a non-Christian world all over the world. The report of the conversion of England by the Commission set up by Archbishop Temple and presented to the Church Assembly, I believe, at the end of 1945, recognized this fact and was concerned with the solution of the problem raised by it. The task of the Church may be the same in the West and the East. But the same task may have to be done in different ways in different places. The point about a Missionary Church wherever it might be is that it has to deliver its message to an audience that does not hold that message. But it is obvious that the audience may be of various kinds.

The two factors to be taken into account in assessing the needs and nature of an audience are its historical circumstances and its own distinctive traits. These may be said to form the constitutive factors of the audience. The historical circumstances in which the church in Africa or India is placed are not the same as the circumstances of the church in the West. In the West the church is *vis a vis* secularism; and a secularism that often is a distortion or reaction against Christianity. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr is fond of saying that Marxism is a secularized version of Christianity. As regards Africa, Bishop Stephen Neill has said that the church must go back to the experience of the Middle Ages to get instruction on how to deal with beliefs about magic and evil spirits. In India the church is *vis a vis* great non-Christian religious systems that have grown up spontaneously. People may differ not merely in regard to the historical circumstances in which they may be situated, but also despite the basic sameness of human nature everywhere, in regard to temperament and outlook. Dr. John Macay wrote an article some months ago on people living on the frontiers of logic. It is not possible to hold rigidly that some people live within the realm of logic, others on the frontiers and others outside the pale. The science of reasoning has different rules in different intellectual areas. The absolutes of thinking and reasoning have a habit of differing. What weighs or decides matters in one place may not do the same in another place. A missionary church formulating its theology must therefore take into account the intellectual temperament of the people it is concerned with.

### The Divisions of Theology

It is possible to divide Theology into three main sections: Historical, Systematical and Practical. Historical Theology deals with the study and interpretation of the original documents behind the message of the church, of the reception of the message and of the religion and cultures and ideas of those to whom the message is taken. Systematic Theology consists of dogmatics, ethics and apologetics; and Practical Theology deals with the issues which confront the Church in its various operations. Some branches of Theology may look autonomous, yet most of them are closely interlocked and the interdependence of all theology has rightly been stressed. Very little theology fails to be influenced by what goes on in other branches. It is quite obvious how much work has to be done in most branches of theology in an Indian setting. It is of course absurd to say that nothing has been done so far. But the application of consecrated minds, trained and equipped for their task to the

work of formulating a theology native to the country is in its initial stages.

In the presentation of its message which forms its basic function, a missionary church while it should be concerned with its audience must realize that its very justification is its message. It should certainly take the utmost care to know its audience and see that what it says is understood and accepted ; but it must take still greater care to see that it is saying what it exists to say. A missionary church in diverse parts of the world may perform its function in diverse ways. Its freedom of expression and experiment may be wide. But a missionary church cannot be either missionary or church if it wants to enjoy any freedom from its message.

Recent New Testament scholarship has uncovered the *Kerugma* that lay behind the Apostolic preaching. C. H. Dodd has analyzed the Pauline *Kerugma* which is practically the same as Peter's, into seven constituent elements. We have no complete account of the preaching of all the early disciples in the towns and cities into which they went. But wherever they went it is this *Kerugma* they bore. It is to preach this that they hazarded or lost their lives. To preach about Jesus basically as one whose work consisted in what He taught about God, about spiritual life and love is not to preach the Christianity of the Church. To preach anything one likes about Christ is not Christianity. P. T. Forsyth has said that it is not simple historical facts that constitute Christianity but a certain interpretation about them. The *Kerugma* is largely an interpretation. The early Church interpreted the life, death and resurrection of a person in a particular way. That was its message. That has always remained the message of the Church.

The task of a theologian in India is neither that of a mere combination of Christian and Indian elements at discretion nor that of attempting to reconcile the Christian faith with any other religious faith. A combination of certain Christian elements with certain elements borrowed locally more or less according to individual whims, with a view to producing an Indian Christian theology, will hardly be more significant than the effort of the gentleman in *Pickwick Papers* who wanted to write on Chinese metaphysics after having read up the articles on China and metaphysics. The reconciliation of one system with another is easy or difficult according to the elements chosen. Nothing is easier than reconciling Christianity with a number of other systems of thought, provided one leaves out what the church set out to say.

Though the church everywhere and always has the mission of proclaiming its message, it takes the specific name of missionary church when it is in an area where its message is not already accepted. The task of a theologian in a missionary church is the expression of its message, not indeed in terms congenial to the modes of thought and concepts current in the environment, but in relation to them and against their background. He is not free to find a message that will in his opinion be more acceptable in the environment. That message is given. Theology will begin to glow only when it is seriously convinced that it is the one worth-while message in the world.



# Findings

The Indian Ecumenical Study Conference Nagpur,  
October 1—3, 1952

We present in this Special Number of *The Indian Journal of Theology* the Findings of the Indian Ecumenical Study Conference which met at Nagpur recently. The Conference took up for study and discussion the four themes which will be discussed at the Asian Study Conference to be held in Lucknow next December under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. These four themes are: (1) The Christian Hope—Jesus Christ the Crucified and Risen Lord, (2) Responsible Society, (3) Mission and Unity, (4) Race Relations. The Asian Study Conference itself is being convened in preparation for the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in Evanston, U.S.A., in 1954. The Indian Ecumenical Study Conference had both the Asian Study Conference and Evanston Assembly in view. We present here not only the Findings of the Conference but two of the introductory papers read at the Conference. These Findings are not final. They are meant to supply material for further study.

The Chairmen of the Commissions on the four themes were Dr. V. E. Devadutt (Christian Hope), Rev. L. Schiff (Responsible Society), Dr. D. G. Moses (Mission and Unity) and Prof. S. P. Adinarayan (Race Relations). Information concerning ecumenical study programme in India may be obtained from Prof. S. P. Adinarayan, Madras Christian College, Tambaram, Chingalput Dist., S. India. The paper on the Christian Hope was written by V. E. Devadutt. The paper on Race Relations was written by S. P. Adinarayan.

# The Christian Hope

## Jesus Christ the Crucified and the Risen Lord

The Commission appointed by the World Council of Churches to choose a theme for its next Assembly has chosen the following: 'The Christian Hope—Jesus Christ the Crucified and the Risen Lord'.

The Christian obviously lives in hope. To him life is not a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing. It has a present purpose and a future direction. To the Christian, history is not a mere endless repetition in cycles of the same old things. It has an inner meaning and therefore a goal. So he lives in hope, a hope that makes the present real and the future assured. But what is the nature of this hope—what is its content? Some see eschatology not only as relevant to this hope but as central to it. In this brief paper I wish to deal with this aspect of the subject, and for a fuller exposition of the subject of Christian Hope I would refer you to the revised statement on it issued by the Commission mentioned above. In our discussion we must return to this fuller exposition and also keep in view the Indian situation, for, our words of hope must be relevant to this situation.

### Liberalism and Fundamentalism

The Liberal tradition in the Christian thought had rejected eschatology. The teachings of our Lord on eschatology were a subject of interest more to psycho-analysis than for serious thought. Jesus perhaps suffered from hallucinations or he accepted implicitly certain contemporary apocalyptic ideas. He was therefore either a psychopath or his humanity was only too real, therefore his divinity all the more attractive. There was also a third possibility. The Gospel writers themselves may have attributed to Jesus apocalyptic notions that were a part of certain Jewish tradition. And so, by whatsoever means, Liberalism sought to explain away those portions of the Gospels that deal with eschatology.

This Liberal tradition has influenced Christian thought on eschatology even outside the Liberal circles and many Christians today, while rejecting the Liberal tradition in general, would still agree that eschatological anticipations are extraneous to the essence of Christian teaching. This rejection of eschatological teaching by the non-Liberals is obviously due at least, in part, to the errors of Fundamentalism of a type. In their literalism, these Fundamentalists have always entertained extreme forms of apocalyptic and millenarian beliefs and have sought to determine a calendar for the return of Christ in glory to judge the quick and the dead.



One might be tempted to dismiss the renewed interest in the subject of eschatology outside the Fundamentalist groups in the Church as due to frustration and despair consequent on two world wars fought within almost one generation with devastating effects to entire humanity ; or one may ask if the atomic age is not tending to turn even intelligent Christians into literalists ? This is not true. The renewed interest is due to a new appreciation of the value, meaning and message of the Bible. This new appreciation cuts across the approaches of both the Fundamentalists and the Liberals. It does not arise in Fundamentalism because the appreciation accepts in the main the results of higher criticism. While it accepts in the main the results of higher criticism, its approach, however, is radically different from that of Liberalism. Higher criticism is essentially analytical in approach and Liberalism stops with analysis. It is unable to see any underlying unity in the Bible which higher criticism in its analysis has broken up into so many parts. The new appreciation on the contrary sees a unity in the Bible, a unity that runs right through all the books of the Bible, despite the truth of the results of higher criticism. This unity is to be found in what God has been trying to do for man. The unity of the Bible in other words is not a unity of conception. There is hardly any developing philosophy of theism in the Book. The unity is the unity of Divine action. Let us take the New Testament. The unity of the New Testament is to be found in the fact that it is centred round one event—the Incarnation, i.e., the act of God in coming into history in Jesus. But while the Incarnation is a unique event, it is not an isolated event. It is the culmination of the redemptive activity of God stretching over a long span of history, and the Old Testament is connected with the New Testament in that it reports that redemptive activity of God which in fulness of time culminated in the Incarnation. In other words, the Bible is the record and report of the revelatory acts of God. No doubt, in the actual report and record there is human error that interposes and we cannot therefore accept the literalisms of certain Fundamentalists. On the other hand, if we approach the Bible from the angle of man's vision of God, of what man has discovered of God, it falls apart into incoherent bits. It is actually reduced to a history of the religious culture of a small nation. This is the essential error into which Liberalism had fallen. In other words, its error is not in its rejection of literalism, it is not in its acceptance of the results of higher criticism, such as that the books of the Bible were often written by authors other than those whose names they bear, that the books were in some cases compilations of more than one written record, that there were historical errors in the Biblical report, etc. Its error is in its failure to see that there was a unity in the Bible despite the truth of the analysis of higher criticism—a unity centred round Divine action. And when we approach the Bible thus, it is no longer the history of a religious culture, however valuable that culture may be, but as the Germans would call it *Heilsgeschichte*, history of salvation, or history of redemption, God being the central actor in this history. Viewed thus, the Bible acquires a new meaning and authority. You cannot brush aside lightly whatever is recorded in the Bible. There is a teaching concerning eschatology in it and we have to take it seriously.

## History within History

I would like us to note the following two relevant points in the Biblical teaching:—

The Idea of History within History. The Biblical record is a narrative of a history within history. There is the normal natural history of the Jewish race, comparable in many respects to the histories of other contemporary peoples. There was the continuous struggle on the part of the Jewish race to weld itself into a strong nation and into a stable political state. We find within the Jewish community parties struggling for power within the community with all the evils attendant on it. But within this general framework of history, other events occur cutting across events initiated by man's desires and ambitions, sometimes halting these events and sometimes using these events to bring forth unexpected results. The Bible attributes these other events to the intervention of God. Let us illustrate. The Jews, still a very small group, are driven into Egypt by a famine in their land. They settle down there amidst Egyptians and live among them as a distinct national and cultural minority. They soon multiply and cause a problem to the Egyptians, a problem comparable in some respects to the problem of the Negroes in the Southern States of America or Indians in South Africa. One of their men brought up in the palace is stirred to his depths by the sufferings of his people and desires to help them. In his impetuosity he commits a murder and to escape the consequences of it, he runs away from Egypt. He becomes a fugitive among a foreign people. He soon settles down to a normal life, succeeds in forgetting his crime and the sufferings of his people. One day while out tending sheep, he sees a flame in a bush but the flame does not consume the bush. He goes near it to enquire into this strange phenomenon. He hears a voice: This is holy ground—put off thy shoes. There God lays hold on Moses and orders him to go and deliver Israel from its Egyptian bondage. Eventually Israel is delivered. A history within history. So you have the same pattern right through the Old Testament narrative. There is the natural history, the sequence of events which are explainable in terms of normal historical causation. But within this process intrude events like the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Exile, return from the Exile, whose explanation is not from the angle of normal historical causation. They are divinely initiated events in history. There is thus a history within history in the Biblical narrative. There is the natural history of the Hebrews and there is the history of salvation. The failure to recognize this distinction has led to much confusion in Biblical studies and in the understanding of the Christian Faith. By distinguishing the history of salvation from the normal history of mankind, we do not reject the latter or deny connection between the two. *This has been obviously the mistake of some theologians. The result of recognizing this distinction is that history itself has not the seeds of redemption embedded within it.* Redemption of history is conceived not as consisting in an evolutionary growth towards an idealized form but in the redemptive intervention of God into history. This is the meaning of Incarnation too. Incarnation creates history within history. Incarnation is both an acceptance of history and rejection of it. It is an acceptance because God uses the medium of history for His self-disclosure by coming into it. It is a



rejection because the Cross, an event in the Incarnation, is the greatest condemnation of history. This rejection of history through condemnation creates a history within history. The redemption through the Cross is not thrown up by history but is a vertical descent into history, showing that the redemption of history is not an *emergent* from history. When we speak of the redemption of normal history as a vertical descent, we should not be understood to imply that God concerns Himself with history only occasionally. God's concern for human history is constant. God's Lordship of history is always a present and continuing reality. We only emphasize the fact that redemption of human history is not an *emergent* from it. This is the Biblical point of view.

### Promise and Fulfilment

Secondly we come across the ideas of promise and fulfilment in the Bible. Now these two ideas are viewed normally as referring to two separate events or two separate series of events. Thus, events of the Old Testament are usually referred to as those of promise, and the Incarnation as the fulfilment of these events of promise. A careful examination will show that promise and fulfilment are not separable. There is indeed fulfilment in promise and promise in fulfilment. This is responsible for the sense of expectancy that you find in the Bible from the first page of Genesis to the last page of the Book of Revelation. This interlocking of promise and fulfilment is also responsible for that sense of tension that you always come up against in the Biblical narratives. The deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage is indeed a promise of things to come but it is also a fulfilment in relation to that particular situation. So, every act of redemption reported in the Old Testament is a promise of things to come but is also a fulfilment in relation to the particular situation in the context of which you speak of it; otherwise it would not be an act of redemption; it would be merely a *means* to redemption. Something has happened; Israel is delivered out of the Exile. That event is complete in relation to itself but there is more to follow—the suffering of Israel foreshadows the Suffering Servant and redemption through the Suffering Servant. Indeed in the New Testament this sense of fulfilment is overwhelming. God's promised Messiah has come. God's reign has begun. Nevertheless, in the very fulfilment there is a promise. The early Christians had a glimpse into what the Messianic age would be but they were realists and knew that this Messianic age and the world had nothing in common. There were foes all round, the Prince of the World was there, there were principalities and powers still to be conquered. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth even now for the manifestation of the sons of God. While the Messiah had come, they look forward to His return. While the Kingdom of God has begun, they look forward to a new Heaven, and a new Earth, to a new Jerusalem descending from heaven.

Thus in the Bible, promise and fulfilment are interlocked. There is promise but in the promised event there is fulfilment and in fulfilment there is promise and consequently the world of the Bible is a world of tension.

## Lordship of Christ

With these two points in our minds we may sum up our conclusion.

We reject the position of the Biblical Literalism with regard to eschatology. It is true we cannot identify any human institution or any form of human culture with the Kingdom of God. We live in a world where only the relatively good seems possible because of the sin of man. The Kingdom of God is a constant reminder of the relative morality of men and therefore of human failure and sin. It is a judgement on man. But the Christian doctrine of creation is that God created the world with a purpose. This purpose is embodied in Jesus Christ who stands as the ἀρχή of creation, i.e., the Formal and Efficient cause of creation. As the Formal Cause something of His Form must have been imparted to creation but as the ἀρχή He is also the end of creation, the eternal archi-type. History therefore has a purpose and direction and this purpose and direction is continuously given by that other history within history—the history of redemption within the natural history of mankind. Therefore the God of Jesus cannot be thought of as having left the world to its sin, waiting for the sin to ripen for a final catastrophic intervention only. Eschatology is neither the negation nor the meaninglessness of the present but the promise of the final redemption of the present.

This final redemption of the present is not a natural growth from the present. Redemption has always been a vertical descent. This seems implied in creation. The Logos having imparted something of His own form to creation and remaining as its eternal archi-type, gave creation its grand possibility and the possibility of its conflict with God and the consequent misery and pain for man. But He who was the agent of creation, and its design, i.e., both the Efficient and Formal Cause cannot be defeated, for creation is both an expression of His grace and power. He shall triumph, even as He triumphed over the powers of evil, darkness and death in His Cross and Resurrection. So we look forward to His triumphant return with the gift of the new Age and new World. This hope of the future is also the assurance of the present.

## Findings of the Conference

In our discussion of the meaning and content of the Christian Hope we must keep in view the Indian situation, so that our thinking may be existential and we may be able to speak real words of hope to our people.

Indians were filled with hope and expectancy when political independence came to them in 1947. They had hoped and, in fact, they were certain that with political independence gained, it was only a matter of time before the age-long misery of poverty, disease and hunger of India's millions would be removed. They confidently looked forward to a new era of peace, contentment and prosperity. But within a short space of three or four years these hopes had completely vanished and had given place to despair, gloom and even to a near conviction that the country had no future.



## The Contemporary Situation

Perhaps the reasons for this changed attitude are the following:—

1. The people expected that with their own leaders at the helm of affairs, *quick* changes for the better would occur in the economic and social spheres. Grinding poverty was the lot of millions. The educated middle class were under a perpetual fear because of economic insecurity. Communalism and casteism kept the nation divided. It was believed that the country had the resources, and the leaders the wisdom to remove these evils *quickly*. The leaders themselves because of their idealism and their inexperience in administration promised too much. But alas, after three, four and five years, few *striking* changes have taken place. The result is frustration of hopes.

2. The people had fully believed that they and the leaders of the country had in them the character necessary for shouldering responsibility and for responsible behaviour in society. Had not the leaders and many common men made great sacrifices for the cause of India's independence? Was not the history of the Independence Movement full of instances of self-giving and sacrificial service? They were indeed a unique people who had won their independence not by the use of the sword but by the strength of their character. Nevertheless, they soon discovered that many of the leaders were gods with only clay feet. The character of the people in which they took so much pride was not really there. Corruption in public life, to which they had previously turned a blind eye, had now become obvious. It had assumed unprecedented proportions. Their belief in themselves and in their leaders had crashed. They began to repeat the slogan, 'India will go the way of China'.

3. Hinduism has its own philosophy of history according to which history had only a pragmatic reality. Reality in itself to the *Advaitin*, at least, is impersonal with no conscious activity of its own; it is changeless and immutable. History on the other hand is a scene of activity; it is the realm of change. As an order representing activity and change it is antithetical to Reality. Therefore, at the highest, history has only a pragmatic reality. There are systems of Hindu thought which repudiate the *Advaita* interpretation of history but even they find it difficult to treat history seriously. Creation is due to the *Lila* of God, a sportive impulse in Him. 'While *Lila* does not imply meaningless playfulness, it expresses the Hindu shyness in ascribing to God purposiveness in creation. Purposiveness implies a working toward ends, and working toward ends implies that there is something that is yet unrealized—something that is in the end only. But to God and in God there is nothing that is unrealized. There is no lack in Him and so it is contended that we cannot ascribe purposes to God. Accordingly there is nothing even in the theistic Hinduism comparable to the Christian conception of the Church, or the Kingdom of God, both of these taken to represent the Christian belief in the partially realized will of God in the temporal order, though both having a futuristic and eschatological reference. Furthermore, the law of moral economy in the world is the Law of *Karma*. No doubt the Law of *Karma* in a sense expresses divine purpose, but once having been ordained by God for man's good, it operates with as absolute an autonomy as the causal law in the

physical realm. So in the end no active and present divine purpose need be resorted to, to interpret history. And on the whole man's duty is to turn away from history, to escape from the cycle of births and deaths and gain *Mukti*—release'.<sup>1</sup> The proper Hindu view then is complete historical pessimism and transcendent or other worldly optimism.

Perhaps it would not be true to say that the historical pessimism of the Hindu thought is directly responsible for the state of mental and spiritual hopelessness that seems to characterize a vast majority of Indians today. The political beliefs and aspirations of a great number of Hindus have their roots in a secular and humanistic culture that is the result of education in Western thought and science. Their hopes for the new India arose out of a deep and confident faith in themselves and their leaders. No doubt the struggle for freedom and the strong nationalist sentiment that went along with it were supported by certain religious impulses. But these were vague and they more or less arose out of a hero-worship, the object of this worship having been Mahatma Gandhi. It was, therefore, a humanistic religion. But when their faith in themselves and their leaders had crashed and the vague religious impulses that arose in their humanistic religion had been dissipated, they had no philosophy that gave meaning to history. Their faith in themselves and their leaders having disappeared and the old miseries of poverty, insecurity, hunger and famine still continuing, their minds have given in to despair and gloom.

When one looks at the Indian Church, it would be unwarranted pretension to suggest that in contrast to the society that is outside it, it is bubbling with buoyant hope. In the first place, it is not truly alive to the seriousness of the situation in the mental and spiritual life of the community around it. In the second place, faced with the fact that the financial support it has been receiving from the West is likely to diminish, it is itself in a state of bewilderment. In the third place, having never been in the habit of concerning itself with contemporary social affairs, and therefore not having been educated to relate its message to contemporary events (in other words, not having been trained in the prophetic function), it stands today as an ineffective spectator of the contemporary scene.

### Revival of Hope

The Christian message of hope, therefore, must be addressed to the community both outside the Church and within it. Before we enquire into the content of the message, however, let us see what efforts are being made outside the Church by non-Christian agencies to revive hope in the hearts of the people.

(a) *Communism*.—Communism promises eventually to remove poverty, hunger and nakedness. It promises economic security by making it the corporate responsibility of society. It professes it alone can remove social and economic inequalities. In addition to promising food for the stomach, it promises to make culture available to all and not only to those who are able to pay for it. Its promises are not based on any ultimate faith in a Providence ruling the universe but on social

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<sup>1</sup> V. E. Devadutt in an essay in the book, *Biblical Authority for Today*, S.C.M. Press, London.



techniques based on the ownership of wealth by the community. It is utopian in outlook and therefore completely optimistic. Its utopianism demands no faith in things unseen but in its own interpretation of history and in a temporary struggle—even though it be bitter—to wrest power from the few vested interests so that eventually it will be vested in a free and stateless society. It is a gospel of hope for the dispossessed who form the majority of the people.

(b) *Technology*.—Some people attribute the ills of India not necessarily to mal-distribution of wealth but to the absence of technological means to develop the enormous resources of the country. In the creation of industries, in the application of scientific methods to agriculture, and of technology generally, to the production of more wealth, lies India's hope of salvation. So we have the slogan 'produce more wealth' and our universities are becoming over-crowded with young hopefuls studying the sciences.

(c) *Religious and Cultural Revival*.—A few are trying to instill hope by an appeal for religious and cultural revival. It is contended that the necessary ideology for reconstructing society on a just basis is available within Hinduism and that the hope of the nation lies in return to its ancient faith. Furthermore, it is frankly recognized that Hinduism is eclectic, or more accurately, that it is tolerant enough to receive new light, though always insisting on the primacy of spiritual values. There is a sincere attempt to conceive an ideal form of society on the basis of ancient teachings and on certain supposedly historical truths. Thus you have the concept of *Rama Rajya*, a version of the Kingdom of God. This appeal to religious revival, however, does not seem to make headway.

### The Christian Hope

In the light of all that is stated above what is the Christian message of Hope ?

In the first place our message must be addressed to the Church.

All that we can say concerning the Christian Hope is relevant to the Church. It must first understand what the Christian hope is, accept it and so order its life in the contemporary situation that it will witness to that hope effectively and concretely. It must be alive to its vocation. If the Church is considered to be the extension of the Incarnation and the Incarnation had a reality in history and a rôle to play in history, the Church must show similar signs in its life. It must take its responsible part in history, though its destinies are bound up with that which is beyond history.

The Christian Hope is rooted in the *Lordship of Christ*. We believe that the Lordship of Christ covers not only the entire range of time, i.e., past, present and future, but that it shall be manifested fully in the new Age that is beyond the range of all temporal reckoning. Perhaps this meaning of the Lordship of Christ can be seen best in the light of the doctrine of creation and redemption, as contained in the teaching of St. John's Gospel concerning the Logos.

In the first place the Lordship of Christ means that He is the Lord of history. History had its beginning in Him and in His activity as the eternal Logos. 'All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.' Thus Christ, the Logos, was

the agent of creation, its efficient cause. But the Logos was also in the beginning and thus was the *ἀρχή* of things, i.e., the embodiment of the ends, the design and purpose of creation. The Logos or the Christ is what the Greeks would have called the 'Formal Cause' of creation or what the Indians call the *Nimitta Karana* of creation. Surely St. Paul also has something of this thought in his mind when in his letter to the Colossians he presents Christ as the eternal Archi-type towards which the whole created order is moving. The Christian doctrine of creation is that at the centre of creation stands the Logos, the Christ, as its meaning, purpose and end. And the Logos is not merely a conception, for, Christ was made flesh, and tabernacled among men being manifest before them in concrete form. Our understanding of the world, of life and of history is derived from what we see in Jesus Christ. Our message of hope to the world in the first place is that the world has a purpose and that in Christ we see this purpose.

In the second place the Lordship of Christ means that Christ is the Lord in History. As the eternal Logos, He is the Word of God that proceeds forth from God, speaking to chosen leaders and prophets, commanding nations, pronouncing judgement on them and offering pardon to them. The same Logos who spoke to chosen leaders, prophets, who commanded nations, pronouncing judgement and pardon, who was made flesh and dwelt among men, lives today as the risen Lord within the Church, nay even outside it, the immanent Lord setting His Church in which He dwells as a sign and seal of His design for a new creation, judging and chastising the Church when it proves disloyal to its vocation, and even using forces outside the Church, because of its recurring apostasy.

Thus to the Christian the Lordship of Christ is a present reality and his hope is rooted in that fact. The Incarnate Logos is the proof for the Christian, of God's perpetual concern for man and the assurance of the working of the Spirit of God in history, striving with the rebellious spirit of man to bring him back to his Father's home. Negatively speaking, therefore, the Christian cannot commit himself to any view that would imply the meaninglessness of the present. He cannot subscribe to these apocalyptic and millenarian beliefs which seem to imply that having condemned and judged the world for its sin, God has withdrawn from it waiting only for sin to ripen for a final catastrophic intervention. Because of the Incarnation which signifies perpetual concern of God for man, and because of the Resurrection which signifies God's power to conquer evil, and because both together imply His immanent presence in His creation, the Christian cannot turn his gaze away from the present to look exclusively to the future. While not minimizing the fact that the world is truly under God's judgement, the Christian affirms that even the fruits of the wrath of man might at the present be singing, if only in a minor key, the very praises of God. The hope of the Christian therefore based on the present reality of the Lordship of Christ challenges him and the Church to exercise the prophetic function, interpreting the Will of God, working for such changes in the society as may appear to be in accord with that Will, in the belief that God in His wisdom will transform all present acts of obedience to His glory in the End.

There is therefore a challenge to the Church in India today. In the face of widespread misery from hunger and nakedness, suffering and



disease, brought about by man's sin of disobedience, the Church cannot keep silent or be indifferent. It is called upon to perform its prophetic function and to assist in such action as may be necessary to bring about a social order reflecting the purposes of God as are revealed and embodied in Christ. It is urgent that the Church in India should know what responsible society in accordance with the purposes of God in Christ means. If it remains indifferent to the need of creating such a society in India, secular and false philosophies as those of Communism and redemption through technology will triumph over it and God's judgement on it will be the emergence of a godless society which will seek to subordinate it to its godless purposes, as has happened in other countries.

In the third place the Lordship of Christ means that Christ is the Lord *over* history. There is no place for historical pessimism in the Christian faith. If the Christian doctrines of creation and redemption are right, the Christian places value on the historical order. On the other hand the doctrine of redemption points to the fact of human sin. He who does not take account of the fact of sin builds his hope on utopian ideals. Some believe that human nature is essentially good and that with proper planning for education, health and welfare, it can be perfected. But the prophets of secular humanism lived to see their hopes belied. With H. G. Wells' 'Mind at the end of its tether' we may say an era had come to an end. The seriousness of the collapse of human hopes is in proportion to the strength of man's faith in the perfectibility of his nature. The collapse of the hopeful attitude of the vast majority of Indians after independence is due, as we have noticed earlier, to their implicit faith in the goodness of themselves and of their leaders. While indeed the spirit of God is working in history, man individually and corporately is continuously at war with the workings of that Spirit. Because of human sin, the noblest of our moralities is only relative. In a sinful society it is an unwarranted pretension to think that absolutes of morality are realizable, though they should always remain our goals. No human institution, and no form of human culture can ever be identified with the Kingdom of God. The noblest of man's achievements are at best only sub-Christian! The Christian does not believe, therefore, that the ends of history can be realized within history ; and yet he does not and cannot doubt these ends for a moment.

When, therefore, we speak of the Lordship of Christ *over* history, what we mean is that despite all human failure Christ will still triumph. The eternal Logos, the Efficient and Formal Cause of creation cannot be defeated, for creation is an expression both of His grace and power. Therefore Christ will be victorious over the powers of evil, darkness and death as in His Cross and Resurrection. So we look forward to the return of Christ in glory with the gift of a New Age and New World. *This certainty of the future is also our charter for the present.*

The Christian Hope is thus rooted in the Christian Faith that Christ is the Lord of History, Lord *in* History and Lord *over* History.

# Responsible Society

## Findings of the Conference

The responsible society has been defined as one in which the freedom of men is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and in which those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and to the people whose welfare is affected by it. The responsible society is a somewhat different conception from any theories of society enunciated by the Church in the past. For we must recognize that the Church, concerning which we use such splendid language, and which points us to heaven, is phenomenally, involved in the relativities of history and of social circumstances. Thus if there be a need for a theology of society, there is also a need for a sociology of religion.

It is significant that in the past, for example, forms of catholicism have been connected with a feudal ordering of society. This finds expression in a close union of an organic nature in which several 'estates' are bound together in a complex relationship of custom, traditions, rights and duties maintained by the authority of the Church and a peculiar system of land ownership. This system is not dissimilar in some respects to the social order which once existed in India, but is differentiated from Hindu society by the predominance of the Church which always provided in some degree a court of appeal. In this hierarchical scheme the Church claimed and achieved lordship over the State.

We find the antithesis to this in Protestantism. The organic union is broken up and new sects and denominations emerge in which we can see one aspect of the rise of individualism so that a close connection is developed between the new Christian individual and the rising middle class. At the same time capitalism represented a new type of ownership of the means of production. Closely associated with this is the emergence of State power and an erastian conception of the Church which in its extreme form regards the Church as little more than a ministry of State for religious affairs. The result has been that whole areas of life cease to be regarded as in any sense the concern of the Church, which tended to accept a pietistic outlook. The revolutionary situation in which we now find ourselves demands a new synthesis. But the social situation varies from country to country. Even in America, State interference has modified the old *laissez faire* capitalism; the welfare state in England has created a new set of problems, and the Communist countries yet others. In every case there has been a very real rediscovery of the nature of the Church, both in its theological essence and also in a growing sense of responsibility for the whole of life—a new organic approach.

## Criticism as a Function of the Church

This must inevitably lead to the use of criticism as a necessary function of the Church's life and witness; a critique first of all of capitalism, which is seen to be liberty of a kind which leads easily to anarchy or to injustice as exemplified in large scale unemployment or wastage of the fruits of production as in the prewar period, or today, in the maintenance of large-scale armament partly to bolster economic prosperity. But it also leads to a critique of collectivism as tending to a denial of freedom. Herein lies the problem: the necessity of holding the tension between the authority and order necessary to prevent the breakdown of society into chaos on the one hand and on the other, the maintenance of the organs of freedom without which a responsible society cannot exist. Thus, the responsible society will negate a liberty which endangers justice in the economic sense and an authority which endangers freedom.

Today, the whole problem has moved towards a further stage of development. The vast increase in technology which can be employed for constructive or destructive purposes, the substitution of the State or of State-controlled agencies for the individual employer or the phenomenon of monopoly, and the vast increase of economic devices such as price and currency control lead to an enquiry as to where true responsibility is to be found. Karl Mannheim in his *Man and Society* asks the fundamental question, 'Who will plan the planners?' It is possible for workers who feel that they are exploited to combine against an employer or at least to criticize him. But it is far more difficult for them to take effective action against a Board or some impersonal structure of this kind or against the State itself. Against this background, let us relate what we have said to the situation in India today.

### The Indian Situation

1. Social thought in the Church is very retarded. Catholics find it easy to criticize capitalism but are suspicious of those who would alter existing arrangements for the ownership of land and tend to a self-righteous condemnation of Communism. Protestants are inclined to identify the Church with a middle class attitude to life or to retreat into pietism or an apocalyptic sectarianism. There is need for the most radical scrutiny of our social philosophy and the Biblical basis for a critique of actual society in India today and a most careful factual analysis.

2. It is important to point out that communism is a symptom and not the disease itself. The real conflict is not in Communism *versus* capitalism but in the mechanization and psychological conditioning of man *versus* the responsible society.

3. There is the problem of the unfinished revolution. India is still faced with the decadent remnants of feudalism. This involves a radical approach to such questions as land tenure and the fundamental rights of the person. We must not forget that there are places in India where cultivators have hardly emerged from the position of serfs. India is bound to suggest to Western friends who had their more-or-less violent revolutions a century or so ago, that they should show some



understanding of the social travail through which this country is bound to pass for some time to come.

4. India is also displaying many of the symptoms of the technological age, e.g. the growing tendency towards centralization, both political and economic, with the consequent vast increase of bureaucracy. One cannot but note also the remarkable growth in the population of the larger cities during and since the last war. This is partly but not entirely the result of the influx of refugees from Pakistan. And so India, like other countries, has to face the problems of what Mumford calls 'megapolis'. These 'conurbations', that is, large aggregates of population in ever widening urban areas, are rootless, communityless and easily become prey to anti-social forces, and it is in these cities that tendencies towards nihilism or at best, social corruption and cynicism, can so easily be produced and then infect the countryside. We cannot escape the challenge of this situation by continuing to insist that India is, after all, a country of villages, though that also is true. For the political life and power of the country, its guiding ideas, its colleges, newspapers and dominant ideologies are fashioned in the cities where men have lost the sense of community. On the other hand, in rural areas, such forms of community as survive, are to a great extent relics of an earlier type of society and no longer fulfil their original purpose.

This is particularly demonstrated by the strange sense in which the word 'community' is employed in India. Whereas the sociologist regards community as 'an area of common living', in India, it has come to mean a closed group of a religious or quasi-religious character. This failure to develop effective new forms of community to deal with the changing character of Indian society, when accompanied as it is by the development of new techniques, is a very serious factor in the general social situation. The Amsterdam Conference pointed out that 'centres of initiative in economic life must be so encouraged as to avoid placing too great a burden upon centralized judgement and decision'. The responsible society involves the participation of the person, of the family and of small groups and communities and it may be necessary to discourage the 'trend toward bigness' so that persons are no puppets of a distant bureaucracy. This may involve the breaking up of many large irresponsible and centralized structures into more manageable responsible units. But this does not mean that there should not be large-scale development in such matters as irrigation schemes which demand a large area for successful planning and which are quite beyond the economic resources of the smaller units. But it does mean that there should be experiment in the development of rural factories and industries which are decentralized and de-urbanized. At the same time, it is necessary to develop more effective rural townships which can become centres for the social and welfare activities of a whole rural neighbourhood.

5. This emphasis on smaller units also demands a new emphasis on voluntary associations. From the secular point of view the Church itself is a voluntary association and it is doubtful whether there can be a responsible society which is not 'pluralist', that is to say, that between the individual and the State, there should be a whole series of subsidiary groups with a real vitality and autonomy. Such an outlook, if made a basis of planning, could take much of the sting out of the present

demand for linguistic states or for regionalism because every kind of diversity can be welcomed, if it be regarded as a means of enriching the whole of society which should not be standardized. If such demands are disregarded, the inevitable result may well be separatist movements and consequent disruption.

6. The problem of the secular State must be analyzed. One may say that in India today there is no one more fitted to define and to vitalize the conception of the secular State than the Christians. There is a very great difference between a secular State and a secular society. It is possible to have a thoroughly secular State in a deeply religious society. What is meant by a secular State is a State in which real religious freedom and real respect for the conscience are accepted by all. If the secular State is to be a reality in India, Christians must not only demand full freedom for the propagation of the faith, but play a lively part in the general life of society. There is a tendency for Christians to live in a kind of 'ghetto'. That is to say, to take shelter within the walls of their own community or compound. Christians must learn to initiate activities and schemes for social welfare and social change which may be adopted by men of goodwill even if they do not accept the faith which inspires such activities. This also applies to political parties and municipal government. For example in the name of the secular State, Christians might well protest against the mentioning of religious communities in any State document or in the lists of candidates in an election, and should avoid any suggestion that one votes for one's own 'community' without a reference to programmes or principles.

7. There is great need for experiment. Intensive thought needs to be given to discovering means to alleviate the mass poverty which continues to be India's greatest problem. In her life the Church must study seriously the relation of theology to social action and the social implication of eucharistic and other kinds of worship, the rich significance of the Biblical teaching on social and economic justice and its relevance to actual conditions in India today. The teaching of the Church at various periods should be critically explored and if necessary reinterpreted in terms of our present situation. But the greatest challenge of all is the need for identification with the under-privileged in town and country. If the responsible society is to be a reality, men must be responsible. This involves repentance and a reorientation of life which has a social as well as a moral or personal content, and it will result in a sense of need for further education and a lively sense of the dignity of the person. In this respect trade unions or peasant unions, can be of immense spiritual significance, but it is essential to develop an effective working class leadership, and this means that one of the most important forms of activity in which a Christian can take part is working class education so that the workers may be increasingly equipped not only to fight for their rights, but to play a significant part in the transformation of the country. The fact remains that our city churches are predominantly middle class in determination and our village churches so desperately poor that they are absorbed in the sheer struggle for existence. It is not enough to do a little social work in a spirit of patronage. We need to develop something equivalent to the movement of the priest workmen in France where preaching or evangelism is preceded by identifications with life situations. It is only

from below that the situation may be transformed. This will only happen when men are filled with the spirit of the incarnate Christ who for our sakes became poor and dwelt among us.

Our discussion involved much consideration of the problem of corruption and it is so easy to be merely cynical and negative, enjoying the revelations of scandal mongers. Again the clue lies in identification with people so that we, with them, may learn to withstand the insidious forces of social decay and personal sinfulness that leads to corruption. But at the same time, we must examine the defects in the social system which encourage it. We must not say that all that is needed is the conversion of the individual because even the best individual cannot be fully responsible in a bad society. The fruit of lives changed by the influence of the spirit of Christ must be seen in a social life that is revolutionized and in the transformation of social institutions. In this way personal evangelism and social revolution must be integrally linked together.



Hence belief in Jesus Christ by men in their various cultures always means belief in God. No one can know the Son without acknowledging the Father. To be related in devotion and obedience to Jesus Christ is to be related to the One to whom he undeviatingly points. As Son of God he points away from the many values of man's social life to the One who alone is good; from many powers which men use and on which they depend to the One who alone is powerful; from the many times and seasons of history with their hopes and fears to the One who is Lord of all times and is alone to be feared and hoped for; he points away from all that is conditioned to the Unconditioned. He does not direct attention away from this world to another; but from all worlds, present and future, material and spiritual, to the One who creates all worlds, who is the Other of all worlds.—H. Richard Niebuhr in *Christ and Culture*.



# The Calling of the Church to Mission and Unity

## Findings of the Conference

The calling of the Church to mission and unity both arise from the eternal gospel which has been committed to its charge. The Gospel or the good news is that in the fulness of time God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to present peace to them that were far off and to them that were near, and to reconcile to Himself by His death on the Cross all men who were the enemies of God. This redeeming work of God in Christ, as already accomplished in the Cross, as continued in His Holy Spirit in the Church, and as still to be completed in the hope of His mighty return, is the basis both of the mission of the Church, its apostolate, and the unity of the Church, its catholicity.

The obligation to take the gospel to the whole world is implied in the very nature of the Christian salvation. Because salvation is the gift of God, and not the fruit of the laborious effort of man ; because salvation is the gracious act of God, His mighty doing, it cannot but express itself in the grateful proclamation of divine generosity. A Christian is constrained to witness to the great things which the Lord has done for him.

The Church is the fellowship of redeemed sinners, gathered from the East and the West, North and South, welded into a super-natural society and founded by the Lord of the Church with His very life blood. It is the body of Christ, the continuous incarnation of Jesus Christ. And as His work was to seek and save that which was lost, so the work of the Church is to continue his work of redemption in the world, to witness to the great salvation which its Lord had achieved and to invite men to accept the offer and to join in the fellowship of the redeemed.

The calling of the Church to unity, to be one gathering of Christ's people, also arises from the same source, namely the work of God in Christ. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.' To the Church has been committed the message of reconciliation. And it is only as the Church is one that it can preach the gospel of reconciliation. A divided Church rent asunder by schisms and separations witnessing to a Lord who broke down middle walls of partition is a contradiction in terms.

The call to the Church to be one, to manifest the wholeness of Christ's ministry to the world, is contained in our Lord's prayer that they all may be one, that the world might believe. The world does not believe that Jesus was sent by God into the world for man and his salvation because the people of Christ are not one.

Mission and unity are indissolubly connected. They cannot be separated even in thought. They pertain to the very essence of the Church and they are the meaning of the Church being the body of Christ.

While this is what we are taught by the scriptures, our actual practice in this regard is very far short of it. It is true that the churches in India are growing in the awareness of their witnessing task, their missionary character. Many congregations and groups have launched out into regular programmes of witnessing and there is increasing missionary fervour. But still large numbers in the rank and file of the Church are unaware of the obligation to proclaim the word to all. We need to thank God for whatever measure of unity has been achieved among the churches in our country, some of it expressing itself in real organic unity. It is necessary to remember that it is as the churches recover their sense of the obligation to witness to the world that they have been led into a deeper and a fuller unity with one another. Similarly the concern for the unity of the Church has been for the purpose of a more effective witness to the world. The gospel is one, the world is one, and the mission of the Church is the total mission of the total Church to the total world.

While it is true that mission and unity are indissoluble and both obligations of the Church, in India the deep desire for unity and for a visible manifestation of that unity has come from the painful consciousness of the tragic futility of a divided witness. Denominational divisions in India have not even the secondary significance they have in the older churches. On the contrary their continued existence in India has been a standing refutation of the claim of the Christian gospel that it is the divine power for the breaking of the middle walls of partition. The Indian Church, therefore, has been arrested in its onward movement of evangelism because of its divided witness. This also explains the coming into being, in the grace of God, of the union churches and the many consecrated efforts going on for deeper and wider unity. Unity is a desirable good for the older churches; unity is an urgent necessity for the younger churches. It is also our experience that our Lord's call to His people to be one cannot be fulfilled by a mere discussion of the differences between the several branches of His Church but by a daring and obedient entrance into unity. We unite only by uniting. We must be willing in the strength of His Grace to sacrifice even our cherished connections if we sincerely desire our Lord's prayer to be fulfilled in our lives.

One practical expression of this new found awareness of the oneness of mission and unity has been the policy of integration of mission and church in the so-called younger church areas. But what is needed is an increasing tempo in the execution of this policy and at the same time a clear understanding that mere transference of power and amalgamation of Church and Mission organizations will not lead to the desired result of a dynamic, witnessing church. What is needed is God's grace to enter into a real partnership in obedience, a fuller and deeper understanding of the whole church proclaiming the whole gospel to the whole world.

# Race Relations

*Introduction:* The race problem in India has never acquired that sense of urgency and sharpness that characterizes it in some other countries like, for example, South Africa or the U.S.A. It would be very pleasant to attribute this to a trait of catholicity or tolerance ingrained in the Indian temperament. Whether there is any psychological foundation for this or not, it is an undoubted fact that provocation he has had in plenty. The rich Indo-Gangetic valley has been the battle ground for horde after horde of invaders, and in most cases the invader stayed behind and became a resident. The opening of the trade routes brought in a new set of European invaders. But somehow right through it all the Indian has managed to keep alive a policy of live and let live. Hindu-Muslim riots are probably the one exception to it and here many other factors besides race entered.

Though never very intense the problem is much more diffused in India than in many other countries. A chromatic scale of many shades takes the place of the sharp antithesis between black and white. Caste adds a further complication to an already confused picture. The three main aspects are Indo-European, Hindu-Muslim and Caste-Harijan.

Within the Christian church in India these problems are to be found in miniature and perhaps on that account intensified. There are certain overall changes. The Christian is committed to a policy of universal brotherhood. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Another community—the Muslim—has also a similar commitment. The Muslim has been keenly watching the Christian to see whether he is a better exponent of the theory of universal brotherhood than himself. The Indian Christian, unlike any other Indian, had to face the British on two levels—on the political as an opponent and on the religious as a fellow worker. During the turbulent pre-Independence days he found himself asking the questions—What is my duty as an Indian? And what is my duty as a Christian? Often there was a conflict. He did not want his nationalism to lag behind; at the same time he recognized that his loyalty to Christ must come first.

*Christians With Different Backgrounds In The Church:* The Christian church in India is an interesting sociological unit. The international element is represented by the Missionaries; the economic by the presence of the mass movement convert. Besides, there are converts from all castes and from Muslims. Problems of internal government introduce the political factor with its unfortunate concomitant—the party system of government. All these factors are to be found in practically every church congregation in India. It is very pleasant to think of these diverse types of people bringing their varying gifts to God, as a new kind of synthesis growing out of these differences. But very often it is merely a poetic fiction.



Let us take the case of the middle-aged high caste convert to Christianity. Some of the most worth-while contributions to the cultural and thought life of the Indian Church have come from a group of such converts. They were able to achieve this because they brought their back-grounds with them. But in this allegiance to the past there is both strength as well as weakness. Man cannot change his nature in the twinkling of an eye. It is a psychological absurdity to expect a convert to give up all his pet prejudices just because he has been converted. If we allow the high caste convert the right to bring in his own background we cannot deny this right to the Harijan convert or the European missionary. Converts of the same caste naturally tend to form a small sub-group within the Church. It is too much to expect the orthodox Brahmin convert to start inter-dining immediately with Harijans. (But at least in South India he seems to have always ended by marrying a Harijan girl.)

Is the Church to produce a new social order, the mongrel offspring of conflicting principles, or issue a charter of minimum demands and allow people complete freedom outside it? This is one of the most important problems facing the Church in India today.

It would be a good idea for a group to select one or two churches in the town and see how the caste system operates within it. To the Harijan conversion to Christianity has resulted in considerable social up-grading. On the other hand the higher caste converts have lost status by becoming converts. Are they seeking to retrieve that which they have lost within the Church? Often this results in grotesque effects, in a caricature of the situation outside. For example, where else can we find such absurd names as Peter Pillai or Joseph Naidu! Cases have been reported where a caste Christian has refused to kneel by the side of a Harijan convert at the Communion table.

Has the general social trend within the Church been in the direction against caste or in favour of it? Marriages in a given church community in one or more years may be studied. How many of them have been intercaste marriages? What position in the social scale do the children of such marriages occupy? Are there any aspects of the caste system that can be retained by the Church? Retention and rejection are not purely intellectual acts. They must be the result of the Church being moved by some dynamic force. Then the discordant elements would be welded into a homogeneous community.

There is a good deal of talk among many nations about the purity of race. There is a corresponding movement in India for maintaining the purity of caste—both outside and within the Church. Are the castes of India pure castes? To what extent has there been intermingling? Here is a job for Christian anthropologists. From the psychological point of view are the children of mixed marriages better than the pure breed? What happens when the intellect of the Brahmin is wedded to the chivalry of the Rajput? Christian sociologists should take an active interest in these problems.

*Regionalism:* This is an off-shoot of the race problem, generally to be found only in big countries. Unfortunately all the conditions necessary for the development of regionalism in its worst form seem to be present in India. In spite of advanced means of travel, distances between states are so great that few people ever leave their state throughout their life.

time. Still fewer people have travelled all over India. The North and the South are peopled by different ethnic groups. The Bengali seems to be a race apart. With the development of linguistic areas the clan feeling has been intensified. Bihar for the Biharis! Bombay for the children of Bombay! This seems to be the predominant slogan. People coming into a state from outside in search of jobs are looked upon with suspicion. Every job given to them means one less to a native. In this respect the Madrasite has earned an unenviable reputation. He has gone right up to the Punjab in search of work. He is to be found in large numbers in government offices all over India. In Poona they have a saying, 'just as flies are to be found wherever there is jaggery so also Madrasites are to be found wherever there are jobs'. He is thrifty by nature, simple in his habits and has made considerable contribution to the cultural life of the other states. All the same he is looked upon with a good deal of suspicion and distrust.

Has this regionalism or state-consciousness invaded the Christian church also? Often the South Indian Christian who goes to other states is made to feel that he is not wanted. He may be assimilated after some time but in the beginning he has a very uncomfortable time. It would be interesting to investigate the attitude of the Southern Christian to the odd Bengali or Gujarati that comes into his Church. Is he welcomed as a brother or cold-shouldered as a foreigner? What is his attitude to the large stream of refugees that have been pouring into the South from Northern India!

Another interesting point to watch—has the southern Christian developed a superiority complex because he has brought off Church union? Does he look down upon the divided North?

The theory of racial characteristics which has done inestimable harm to the cause of universal brotherhood finds its counterpart in the theory of state characteristics—the Gujarati is avaricious, the Bengali inscrutable, the Tamilian cunning and the Andhra a simpleton—crude and uncouth. Is there any psychological evidence in favour of this theory? The Church can take the lead in preventing the spread of harmful stereotypes. And to enter into this task wholeheartedly the Christian himself should not claim a monopoly of virtue. Often Christians show great surprise when a Hindu behaves decently. This form of conceit must go. They must recognize the existence of a basic morality as good as theirs among people of other religions. The characteristic contributions of Christianity are not on the moral but on the spiritual level.

*Relationship Between Foreign Missionaries and Indian Christians:* The attitude of the Indian Christian towards the Missionary has, during the last hundred years, gone through three stages of development roughly analogous to the Hegelian dialectic thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The first stage was a period of patronage by the Missionary, a period of the Indian Christian looking up to him as the big boss, the last word on every subject; a time of docile acquiescence. This early attitude has been fitly pilloried as the 'Mission bungalow mentality'. The second stage which coincided with the rising tide of nationalism in the country was one of bitter hostility to the Missionary. He was accused of having a superiority complex, of keeping down the Indian and of having an unsympathetic attitude towards Indian culture. Fortunately this period

of hostility had a constructive side to it. The relationship enters a new stage in the post-Independence period where the dominant desire is to meet on a footing of equality and work together for the common good. Yet the atmosphere is not altogether free from suspicion and jealousy.

The Missionaries who brought Christianity to India came with presuppositions which were not always sympathetic. They came to rescue not to learn, and they forget that they came to a country which had an ancient culture and philosophy. Though there were many brilliant exceptions, on the whole the realities of the Indian cultural situation were completely ignored or contemptuously set aside. One result of this was that the Mission bungalow was built not in the heart of the town but away from it. Under its sheltering walls the Indian Christian grew up and came of age. Persecuted by the intolerant Hindu he was glad of the shelter. There were economic causes also. The early Christians were mostly poor and were offered some kind of employment within the Mission compound. This economic dependence made him rather servile. He was unwilling to criticize the Missionary even when he knew that he was wrong, lest he should lose his job.

With the growth of nationalism the Indian Christian began to be cold shouldered by the rest of India as an ally of the enemy. All white people irrespective of nationality or political sympathies were classed as part of the ruling bureaucracy. The Indian Christian began to smart under this allegation. He was anxious to prove that he was as patriotic as any other Indian. He had also by this time acquired a certain amount of economic independence. The community could no longer be equated with the denizens of the compound. There were Christians in all walks of life. Some of them fairly high up. Then they revolted. This revolt was characterized by a violent and somewhat unreasoned criticism of everything that the Missionary said or did.

The growing spirit of nationalism placed the British Missionary in a somewhat dubious position. Often he was sympathetic towards Indian aspirations but could not speak of it as openly as he would have liked to. Most of his humanitarian undertakings in the country depended on government grants for their upkeep (partially, a good deal of money did also come from Britain) and this source of supply would have been undoubtedly cut off if they openly took sides. Other European Missionaries were in an even more delicate position. Their very presence in the country depended on the goodwill of the government. Under these circumstances it was unseemly to take sides. A few spoke but the majority kept silent. Their silence was construed into sin.

There was a constructive side to this wave of anti-missionary feeling that swept over the country. It resulted in a parallel feeling for the Indianization of Christianity. The appearance of Sadhu Sunder Singh, the growth of the Ashram movement, the founding of the Christo Sumaj and the Indian Christian Book Club all proclaimed the fact that the Indian Christian had come of age and no longer needed a nurse maid.

We are now in the third stage. Independence has cleared the atmosphere considerably of all kinds of racial hatred. The time has come for synthesis—when the Missionary and the Indian Christian can meet on a common platform and work for the glory of Christ in India.

Yet can we honestly say that all is well with this relationship? Has the Indian Christian completely purged his mind of his racial



prejudices? It is claimed that Missionaries have not shown as great a desire for transferring responsibility to the Indian as they should. It would be disastrous if the Indian Christian should scramble for power but it will be even more of a catastrophe if an out-worn theory of racial superiority flourishes in the seclusion of the Mission compound. It would be a tragedy indeed if our Mission bungalows become the last out-posts of Imperialism in India. We do not want colour prejudice of the wrong type in this country. No Indian should claim any special privileges for himself just because he is an Indian. On the other hand, neither do we want the Missionary to subscribe to a theory of Indian leadership with mental reservations.

*The Church and The Race Problem:* Some suggested angles of approach:—

1. The Church must proclaim and take its stand unhesitatingly on the principle of human equality without any conditional clauses.

2. It should be realized that Christianity stands for the fullest development of personality. Prejudices of all types impede the growth of personality. Here is a field where pastoral psychologists can help most. Prejudice and conflict are linked up together. Race conflict is but the externalization of an internal conflict between desire and duty. The pastor with psychological training can do much towards resolving these conflicts in individuals.

3. A firm stand regarding principles should be combined with a realistic approach. The Church should help individuals to face the problems of prejudice, not to hide them under some vaguely idealistic type of philosophy. Each individual must be encouraged to ask the question—How can I do my little bit to bring about a better state of affairs? Along with large scale policies, as many contacts as possible between individuals of different nationalities should be encouraged. It would be as well to recognize that today there exists a big gap between theory and practice in the matter of race relations. This is the first step towards improvement.

4. The Church should encourage scholarship and research. Most prejudices have historic and social origins. These should be studied and understood before attempts are made to remove them.

5. The Church should initiate group activities where people of all nationalities and castes can participate without fear of patronage or insult.

## Findings of the Conference

The discussion was confined to the three main topics dealt with in the introductory paper.

1. *Caste in the Indian Church:* The problem was more acute in the South than in the North and even in the South, it was not so serious in the Syrian Church, since till recently it did not make converts and was a homogeneous body. The more objectionable aspects of caste in the Church, e.g. refusing to kneel down by the side of a Harijan at Communion, separate seats for separate castes, had now completely disappeared throughout South India. Caste existed in the official circles where competitive employment and elections were concerned,

and in its worst form in Church Government. It was very common in elections for rival Christian candidates to trade on caste loyalties. It was also very difficult to send to a particular diocese a Bishop who was outside the prevailing caste group in that diocese. A foreigner was invariably preferred. The greater inter-caste tolerance found in the North in general, was reflected in Church circles also. As a reason for this the suggestion was thrown out that caste was more definitely along occupational lines there. The intense 'caste' feeling among 'depressed class' converts to Christianity (e.g. Mala and Madiga in Telugu areas) was also commented upon.

The following practical suggestions were put forward:—

- (1) The Christian doctrine of work should be taken more seriously and applied as a corrective to the view that certain types of work are degrading and those who do them are polluted.
- (2) Every Christian must make it a point to stand up boldly against all types of harmful caste feeling and must be prepared to suffer persecution for doing so.
- (3) Steps should be taken to make the Church realize the seriousness of this problem.
- (4) Widespread factual surveys under expert psychological guidance should be undertaken.

2. *Regionalism*: exists in the Church in two forms (a) the cold shouldering of Christians coming from other states, (b) Christians coming from one state to another forming exclusive minority groups. As a remedy for the second type of regionalism, people going from one state to another should make a whole-hearted attempt to identify themselves with the state of their sojourn, join the local churches, and completely purge their minds of all ideas of superiority. Christians should go from one state to another not merely in search of well-paid jobs but also on missions of good-will and evangelism. The 'division of India' created a new problem in regionalism and one needs to examine carefully the attitude of the Indian Christian to his brother in Pakistan.

3. *Indo-European relations within the Church*: The question was mooted whether Mission bungalows were becoming the last out-posts of Imperialism in India. It was felt that this was more a fear than a fact. At the same time to say that Independence had cleared the atmosphere of all suspicion and fear and that the stage was now set for the harmonious co-operation between the Indian Christian and the Missionary was to shut one's eyes to certain facts. Though outwardly unfavourable conditions had disappeared, hidden complexes still lurked in the background and if not checked would lead to harmful results. The problem of transfer of responsibility was the crux of the matter. Missionaries should not wait till competent Indians turned up to hand over responsibility, but make Indians competent by an immediate transfer, backed up by sympathetic guidance. The Missionary should not wash his hands of the whole business the moment transfer was made or stand aloof and develop an 'I told you so' attitude when catastrophe followed, but must be prepared to help even though not in office. This was not easy and needed Christian grace. It should, however, be mentioned in fairness that quite a few Missions in India have made complete transfer of responsibility and that for one reason or another the result of such an

action has always not been altogether satisfactory. Where the motive in asking for transfer of responsibility is to obtain power and position in life, the results are bound to be disastrous. The Indian Christian ought to examine his motives and realize that in the work of the Kingdom the only legitimate motive is service and self-giving.

On the social level, in the relation between the Missionary and the Indian Christian, a great deal could still be done. Even in institutions, e.g. colleges and schools, where the social gap was the narrowest there was still a lot of underground dissatisfaction.



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# The Church—Can it Meet the Social Challenge Today?

CHANDRAN DEVANESEN

Our faith in Christ does not depend upon our being able to answer the question in the affirmative. And even if we answer it in the negative, as I am tempted to do, it should not destroy our trust in God's sovereignty over history. The church is in the world and cannot be exempted from the necessity for change. In fact, some churches are already part of the rubble of history. Churches are not outside the cycle of growth, decay and regeneration but their chequered histories cannot alter the central and unique event of all history, the Incarnation, which they try to make explicit in every age, however sinfully and imperfectly. The church can never be the perfect embodiment of the Incarnation, 'full of truth and grace'. It can only testify to the supreme perfection of the Incarnation. Therefore, the moral goodness of the church is not a seeking after perfection for the sake of perfection but the attempt to enable men to see more clearly how the Incarnation is the saving power of God at work in history. If the church is unable to meet the social challenge today it does not mean that God is powerless to save; it obviously means that those who reject God are also those who go to church. God is worshipped but not obeyed; and our inability to meet the social challenges of today shows that God is not mocked.

Repentance must come first; without it no answer can be found to this question. The forgiveness of sins comes before the communion of saints. Penitence and the search for community always go together. But penitence itself is in danger of expressing itself in too conventional ways. Next to hypocrisy, the most deadly vice among Christians is the fear of appearing unconventional. Though non-conformity often degenerates into sectarianism, it is vital to the constant renewal of the church. In India, where group sentiment is strong and all-pervasive, the refusal to conform calls for real courage. There is also a strong temptation to stifle individuality in the interests of group harmony. India has always tolerated the man who follows the pattern of his own group. The man who follows no pattern is either destroyed or worshipped. Therefore, the tendency towards social compromise will be stronger than any urge to challenge the social conscience. The church in India must repent of its social compromises with caste, lingualism and communalism. Real impenitence may take the form of confessing minor personal sins. It is outrageous to think that Christ's sufferings on the Cross were necessary to save us from such petty stupidities. We are just pious enough to strain the gnat and swallow

the camel. We are nice, decent people who practise caste, demand dowries, exhibit racial and colour prejudices, pay for huge armaments and destructive weapons and sing 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble and meek' without turning a hair.

The impenitence of Christians is in sad contrast to the enthusiasm of secular men for change and reform. To condemn liberal optimism on theological grounds is not to redeem ourselves from lethargy and inertia. Man is depraved but not utterly hopeless. Secular despair is not so bottomless as to make men give up the search for remedies. Man is a fallen creature with an urge to get up. We have made for ourselves a picture of man's depravity which makes us averse to the struggle for upholding his dignity. We use a doctrine of sin to excuse our own sins! The attitude of the average Christian to politics shows that constant stress on the depravity of man can lead to a weakened social conscience which cares little or nothing for the dignity of man. This is what Florence Allshorn meant when she said, 'I do feel that Protestantism works too much on a sub-conscious feeling of suspicion—possibly because it is so concerned, sincerely concerned, with sin—that it loses the vision of the lovely thing a human soul really is, a thing trembling with hope because *somewhere*—stified to death almost but somewhere—it has a knowledge that it could become a son of God'. But our modern theology is so proud of having discovered Humpty Dumpty.

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.*

Man is fallen ; man cannot put himself together again. The church understands man's moral dilemma ; it sees the problem of evil in its true perspective. And yet there is something distressing about this savagely clear point of view. We seem to derive a gloomy satisfaction from seeing Humpty Dumpty's remains littering the ground. Do we not want to see Humpty Dumpty put together again ?

The revival of interest in history in Christian circles is not necessarily a mere reaction to the historic materialism of Marxism. It may also be a reaction to the Continental theological outlook, typified by Luther, with its dualist attitude to the possibility of establishing a Christian culture. To be told that the Kingdom of God is not realizable within history must necessarily dampen any enthusiasm for social change or at best make one rather lukewarm in one's attitude to social problems. In India, a land of all too numerous problems, such a theology is in danger of being indistinguishable from *karma* or *kismet*. Theologies of predestination and total depravity ought to be banned in India! While the doctrine of sin is a fundamental dialectical necessity to a doctrine of *tat tvam asi* we need a vigorous theology that energizes the spirit of men and makes history more meaningful. Gnosticism ought to find a prominent place in the curricula of our theological institutions! And as an antidote to Barth we ought to read more of Augustine and Abelard, F. D. Maurice and T. S. Eliot. In claiming that F. D. Maurice is a more significant theologian for India than Barth we are not decrying the greatness of Barth. It is only a recognition of the fact that the church in India is in a historical setting and a stage of development which is different from the background of the West.

If we are concerned less with man's sin and more with his dignity, his soul made in the image of God, we might be in a better position to meet the social challenge today. We would fight more strongly against ugly things like economic inequality, racialism and caste. We would be less afraid to own that the personal ethic can solve but little in our massive technical civilization. The levers of justice have become gigantic in proportion to a mass society; equal rights and equal opportunities for all obviously require the courageous manipulation of economic handles. Why do we flinch from the truth that the spiritual malaise of our time is deep-rooted in the class struggle? Why do we not accept that this is the bitter price of our civilization?

We are not only impenitent but we are also selfish—and selfish in a hypocritical fashion. We, who proclaim that outside the church there is no salvation, often conveniently forget the involvement of the church in the very ills which challenge the social conscience. The modern heroes of the church like the Reverend Michael Scott are completely outnumbered by the Reverend Doctor Malans. The glitter of the ecumenical movement is soiled by the churches into which dogs, Asiatics, and Negroes are still not allowed. Is it always naive to protest that the financial arrangements of the church reveal more than just its class alignment? Or take our obsession with salary scales on the mission field. The most soul-destroying experience that any man could go through is to sit on a church committee responsible for revising salary scales. And yet the Communist Party in India can attract youngmen of real ability and mental calibre to serve it for a mere pittance. The Church Militant is still sitting in committee 'to devise ways and means' while the Communist Party marches down the street with red banners fluttering.

At a time when our desperate plight should lead us to look for more radical methods for proclaiming Christ we are content to find shelter behind the institutionalized nature of the church. It has largely ceased to be a fellowship, a way of life. The church seems to have become a mere organization that has to be supported and kept alive. Keeping the machine functioning efficiently demands most of our time and energies. We have no time to pray, no time to put *being* before *doing*. We lose sight of real spiritual values and the living God becomes the *deus ex machina*. In some ways the political cry of *Vox populi vox dei* is better than this mechanical conception. The modern forces of evil have developed the *blitzkrieg* while we are bogged down in our trenches or busy fighting shadows. We are like some sprawling medieval army with a vast accretion of camp followers and too long a baggage train while all around us is the Enemy; he travels light; his tactics are those of the guerilla and the commando. We hold councils of action which the camp followers never hear about. We say sublime things to each other hoping the Enemy will benefit by eavesdropping. We quarrel endlessly about how to become more united. We go about handing out leaflets to our own rank and file while the Enemy blasts the air with his propaganda. Aldous Huxley was right. The Gumbriel instinct for inventing pneumatic trousers in which to sit in our pews is still very strong!

Can we break through the vicious circle of our own terrible selfishness so that the church could bring salvation to men perishing in an evil world? I doubt whether we can. 'Except a grain of wheat fall to the earth and die . . . ' The old shell of the church must die if its spring is to



be liberated. The church may have to be smashed in order that it may be reset properly like a fractured bone. Only some tremendous convulsion can free the church from its involvement in wrong property relations, class prejudice, racialism and all the other cancerous growths within it. Purged by suffering, it may be reborn as the true Body of Christ, offering the sacrament of abundant life to all men. We may yet have to witness the terror and the majesty of the mills of God grinding exceeding slowly and grinding exceeding small. This point of view should not be interpreted as a resigned acceptance of Marxist historic determinism. Our God is the God of history and historic determinism may not work out the way men think it will work out. To both the Marxist and the Christian it may yet prove the visible sign of God's sovereignty.



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# Some Views on the Ideal of a 'Responsible Society' for India

M. M. THOMAS

The term 'Responsible Society' denotes the attempt of the World Council of Churches' Study Commission on Society to define an ideal of society for our age which is different from individualistic Capitalism and totalitarian Communism; an ideal which on the one hand is informed by the Christian insight into the nature of man as a person destined for responsible living in society, and on the other does adequate justice to the nature of the sociological revolution brought about by modern technics. My attempt in this article will be to examine some of the features of a similar ideal that has emerged in India and to evaluate its power to achieve the ideal. In reality, my aim is no more than to survey the attempt of those who reject the *laissez faire* ideology of Capitalism and the totalitarian answer of Communism, to define their ideal of what is broadly called Socialism. This does not mean that one is talking all the time about the Indian Socialist Party and its ideology. While it is true that the socialists of the I.S.P. form the organized expression of this ideology, the ideology itself has a broader basis, finding expression also in Nehru and the National Planning Committee of the Government under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, as well as Vinoba Bhave and the other leaders of the more orthodox Gandhian school of social thought. The recognition of the necessity of a social revolution for justice and a search after the most human means to achieve it without turning it into a new oppression, are common to all the representatives of this 'idea'.

## A New Discipline of Responsibility

Asoka Mehta, the secretary of the Socialist Party of India, speaking at the Madras Congress of the Party in 1951 on the fundamentals of socialism says that both capitalist individualism and communist collectivism depersonalize man. With the impact of the machine, says Mehta, the traditional village pattern with its 'organic bonds between man and land and among men *inter se* have snapped', and the alienated individual in an industrialized society has to live his life of utter loneliness which terrifies and dehumanizes him. 'In the modern urban and industrial agglomerations, not only is there no natural bond between man and nature—the sonatas and symphonies of the wider life around

man are hushed in the cities of today—but there is also neither the free, tacit communion between man and man. Sympathy and antipathy are emotions that man understands and responds to, but indifference freezes him. In the modern world the prickly thorns of indifference is the normal lot of an urban man. ‘I came into the city and none knew me, none came forth, none shouted, he is here!’ The individual becomes an isolate. And the question is, ‘How are the shattered strings of the harp to be restrung and their lost notes recovered?’

Is Communism the answer? No, says Mehta, ‘The frightened, frustrated individual instead of being taught the discipline of responsibility, of integrality, is subjected to a collectivistic coercion. In the place of the free and human being, a new and terrible mass-man has emerged.’ He outlines the features of this mass-man: ‘The Mass-man is taught to believe in the sacrifice of the individual to the collective, the substitutability of one individual by another, the nonvalidity of individual morality with respect to the collective, the necessity and inflexibility of hierarchical discipline and the inevitability and the strange beauty of violence. The Mass-man functions not on the human but zoological level.’ And the result? ‘Every aspect of life is controlled by the *raison d’etat*. The diverse threads of life are gathered together into a political knot. Art, culture, education, science are controlled by the State. Thought wears a strait-jacket and the artist is put in uniform. The State becomes all pervasive; inside the State the ruling party wields absolute power and within the party the leadership is supreme. Vamping man’s weaknesses and frailties the Leviathan reduces all men to a dead level—interchangeable parts of a machine.’ Why this swing from an irresponsible individualism to an equally irresponsible collectivism? Says Mehta, ‘It is the tiredness of the human spirit that breeds totalitarianism. From over-all negation, from cynical repudiation of all values, from bitter nihilism, man swings over to the polar opposite—adoration of discipline and hierarchical order.’

There is a third concept which sees man essentially as a ‘responsible being’. Both Gandhism and Socialism in India today, taking their stand on this concept, are concerned to break the false alternatives of Capitalism and Communism by ‘a new discipline of responsibility, of integrality’. There is a great deal of difference between Gandhism and Socialism, but both are beginning to learn from one another and each to redefine one’s own ideal in the light of the other’s, so that Nehru and Jayaprakash Narain who in themselves are both socialists and Gandhites at once, look forward confidently to an inevitable ‘integration’ of the two ideologies into one. Says Jayaprakash, ‘Gandhi is the one tremendous fount in India from which socialism will continue to derive inspiration’. The features of the ideal of Responsibility thus emerging are not yet clear; but some points are worth noting.

### Some Features of the Responsible Society

#### I

There is a deep awareness that a society to be truly responsible should be conceived as a plurality of decentralized societies and not as one centrally organized concentrated mass.

Gandhi’s principle of *swadeshi* (love of neighbourhood) which to him was almost a religious creed, an eternal Natural Law of social ordering,



was an emphasis on the priority of the small neighbourhood societies in which persons could know one another by name and love and serve one another in a concrete manner. Gandhi saw the destruction of such neighbourhood societies of the villages of India through the centralized industries, and hence he set his face against the encroachment of the machine. The problem of the machine civilization which Gandhi posed, socialists recognize is a most real one, and while they would emphasize the need of industrialization for India, they would pause and warn about the peril of annihilation of the humanity of man through it, a peril which can be prevented only by planned decentralization along with the inevitable centralization which the machine brings. They see clearly that 'either we must put back the hands of economic and technological changes and regain balance through the old institutional and instinctive aids, or we have to meet life in terms of varied groups of autonomy and phases of responsibility.' Thus while rejecting Gandhi's solution through restriction of 'the tempo of change and growth' and return to 'traditional patterns of life' as 'not possible', the socialists place a great deal of emphasis on the principle of 'pluralism'. Says Mehta: 'The new discipline cannot find full expression until far-reaching social and economic changes are made. But those changes can be fruitful only to the extent the complex world is broken down, here and now, into many layers and on each layer a new understanding and integration among men and between men and things are attempted. Life's lotus is many-layered and every petal is precious. Socialism therefore conceives of a pluralistic world: political life becomes a pyramid of autonomous groups and economic life is thought of in terms of functional freedoms. Only in a republic of freedom does man discover full Freedom.'

This emphasis on building society from bottom upwards is to counteract the danger of the technical betraying the social and human, and to make technical changes in the structure of society enhance the humanity of men. The concentration on the technical changes has made the communist 'a reactionary rather than a revolutionary', says Jayaprakash. He continues, 'Socialism is not merely anti-capitalism nor statism. Nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture are important aspects of socialist economy; but in themselves they are not socialism'. On the contrary, socialism is the creation of 'a society based on certain human values of human and social life; values which could never be sacrificed in the name of theory or the Party line or expediences of any sort'.

## II

There is clear awareness of the problem of power-politics necessary for socialist revolution. Achyut Patwardhan, a foremost leader of the I.S.P. writing to the Madras congress of the Party gave his reason for withdrawing altogether from politics to become a *yogi*. He says how for the past twenty years he had been in the thick of the fight for social justice and how experience 'led most of us to seek political power as the major instrument of social change'; and as a result 'political power became the sole immediate objective of our organized efforts'. The consequence was 'deviation of *social* philosophy into *power* philosophy', an 'outlook of seeking power at any price' and 'the growing vogue of ruthlessness in our public life'. Achyut recognizes that 'this tendency is

not more particularly at work in the Socialist Party ; it is the prevailing mode of political action all the world over'. And he concludes: 'There must be another approach to social regeneration which does not negate itself in the vicious circle of power politics'; and to discover this 'path of social redemption which can forge for itself an instrument as worthy and sane as the end it seeks to attain' Achyut becomes a *yogi*. Commenting on this, Jayaprakash says, 'We are aware of the limitations to which he has drawn attention. It is not possible for a political organization to convert itself into a spiritual organization, but as I have stated above the Socialist Party by subscribing to the principles of Democratic Socialism is endeavouring to safeguard the very human values which he wants to preserve by other means. . . . It is precisely because we are interested in preserving and creating certain values of social life, it is precisely because we are interested in building up a *socialist society*, and not merely in the establishment of a *socialist state*, that we have raised the banner of democratic socialism.'

Here again Gandhiji has posed the problem most acutely and no one in India who has some reverence for man as a person can afford to bypass him. Nehru over and over again speaks about the relevance of Gandhian doctrines of truth and non-violence to any revolutionary situation. In a message to the Lucknow Conference on Religion, Culture and Morality he said, 'We live in a rapidly changing age when it has become essential to replace our old political and economic structures. . . . Nevertheless there must be something permanent in the essential cultural and moral values which does not and should not change. If that changes then the social structure may lose its anchorage completely. Mahatma Gandhi laid constant emphasis on this vital aspect of existence. He called it truth and non-violence. . . . His basic lesson that only through right means can right ends be achieved is seldom remembered. Repeatedly even in our generation, failure and disaster have faced the world because of wrong methods and wrong means. And yet we go round the self-same path not learning from our experience.' No wonder every socialist who is not a communist is viewing with admiration and expectation the *Bhoodan Yagna* (Land-gift movement) under the leadership of Gandhian leadership ; and the Socialist Party while considering it 'slow' and 'inadequate' has officially resolved to co-operate with the same in so far as it contributes to the agrarian revolution in India.

Gandhism however does not recognize the class-struggle which socialism does. Socialism therefore goes a step further and seeks to use all non-violent methods (both organized constitutional agitation and peaceful civil-disobedience) in the class-struggle to attain its ends ; thus keeping politics the servant of the truly social revolution. Because of their awareness of the necessity and peril of power in society, the socialists unlike the Communists, take their stand on a genuine appreciation of the fundamental freedoms which liberal democratic institutions seek to safeguard even as they want to make them substantial by putting more economic and social content.

### III

It is clear from what has been said above that Indian socialism does not define socialism as primarily an economic doctrine and adhere to it in any doctrinaire way. But it is eager that its emphasis on the

*social* should not lessen (that it does, is the criticism of Communists) the passion for the revolution in the economic structure of society which is urgently necessary to achieve the new social discipline. It is the common conviction of Nehru, Jayaprakash and Vinoba that urgent radical changes in the economic structure of society are needed to 'liberate' the peasant, to satisfy his land-hunger and reinstate an economic basis for the societies that nurture personal responsibility among the peasantry. If China has taught any lesson it is that on this issue will be decided the future of democracy *versus* totalitarianism in Asia. 'Always the Kuomintang points the moral for the rest of Asia' says Maurice Zinkin, in *Asia and the West*, and it is the same moral the socialists have learned from nearer home in Telengana and the last General Elections. India if it is not to fall a prey to Communism should have a 'solid base of a contented peasantry'; and 'the peasantry can be kept contented if it is enabled to own its own land, to earn enough to live on and to remain free from hag-riding debt'. Therefore the socialists of India have set before themselves 'a radical policy against landlord and moneylender'. There may be differences regarding the tempo of changes, the question of compensation, etc., but the aim set forth is clear and well-defined—it is nothing less than abolition of landlordism and the moneylender. 'Subject to the ultimate right of the community, land must belong to the tillers and all intermediaries should go', reads an I.S.P. resolution of 1951, and it goes on, 'Except for rehabilitation, compensation to small landlords, no compensation should be paid for the abolition of landlordism'.

The socialist policy to private *vs.* public ownership of the means of production or to national *vs.* foreign investment is not so well-defined but is pragmatic. This is for the obvious reason that India has a backward economy which needs first and foremost increased industrial production. Socialists seek to examine the question of 'nationalization' itself from the point of view of the primary need of production. There is a common conviction among socialists that 'all the available and created factors of production must be applied in accordance with a plan', under which a mixed economy will function—industries: cottage, medium and large-scale; sectors: private, public and people's; and investment: national and foreign. But the I.S.P. considers 'nationalization of basic industries' a condition for success of such an 'overall plan', which has social welfare as its aim.

### Can India realize this Ideal?

India has only two alternatives before it—either this ideal of Responsible Society or Communism. But the question remains whether according to a realistic estimate of social realities in India, can this ideal of social democracy be realized. Here there are many 'ifs' and 'buts'. But to argue that Communism, whether desirable or not, is inevitable is to accept defeat before the battle is joined and to make it inevitable. And therefore let us consider some problems in the way of realizing Responsible Society in India and the tasks involved there.

First and foremost, the ideology of Socialism is weak because it lacks coherence. Socialism in India is an attempt to hold on to what is true in Liberalism, Marxism and Gandhism and to reject what is false



in them. Half-truths of idealism, materialism and moralism will not cohere except when redefined in the light of an interpretation of man, society and social history which is 'more comprehensive in its range of apprehension and more thorough in its appreciation of the interplay of factors in the real world' than any of them. Asoka Mehta, unlike many of the socialists who are thoroughgoing naturalists, conceives of 'ultimate truths of life' which are 'not historical and sociological'. He says, 'It is man's nature to live simultaneously in temporal truths and eternal verities. Socialism has mighty power because it inheres the amphibious nature of man.' But Mehta's dialectic of the temporal and the eternal is not shared by most socialists and socialism has remained mighty weak.

Secondly, the idea of responsible society lacks in India today a supporting culture. Jai Prakash speaking of the weakness of the socialist ideology says that it did not become 'a burning inspiration'; 'where arguments convinced the mind the heart remained cold. Democratic Socialism was intellectually satisfying perhaps, but it failed to evoke that emotional response which makes men die for their ideas'. And he is of the opinion that it is due to 'the preoccupation with theories and neglect of values.' Do 'values' evoke 'emotional response' unless they are embedded in a culture, in the art, liturgy and other archetypal representations which feed the imagination and mould the emotional responses? The ancient culture of India did not know the values of responsible personality; certainly its redefinition has been going on from the time of Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhi and Nehru, and on the wake of national freedom there is a renewed search for a redefined national culture which will become an effective support for the new democratic politics. But it is not yet, and the existing divorce between social democratic politics and the culture which moulds the emotions cut the nerve of socialistic idea and politics.

Thirdly, Responsible Society conceived of as an ideal is impossible. Ideals do not generate power, only faith does. Liberalism had in its heyday and Communism has now, the elements of faith in them, because they are associated with a concept of what *is*, of the nature of reality. In those who adhere to the ideal of Responsible Society, I mean the best of them like Nehru, Mehta, Jai Prakash, Vinoba Bhave and others, it is associated with certain values which have the nature of an 'ideal' or 'law', of what *ought to be* than what *is*. Even Mehta's dialectic which conceives of 'achievement of self-harmony and acceptance of the rights and reality of other men' as the absolute ethical ideal does not comprehend the question of the ultimate dimension of reality which will explain the existence of the absolute ethic and its denial among men.

What is the contribution of the Christian and the Christian Church in this situation?

# A Christian Critique of Contemporary Democracy

V. E. DEVADUTT

In an article that I wrote in the last number of this *Journal* I attempted to answer the question whether the ideals of democracy could be derived from Hinduism. I maintained that they could not be, at least not from monistic Hinduism. The subject of democracy is not merely of academic interest. India has voted for democracy and many are convinced that the success or failure of the democratic experiment in India will influence the future course of history in many lands of Asia. India has thus a tremendous responsibility on her shoulders. To the Christian, the success or failure of democracy is not a matter of indifference. I maintained in my last article that the democratic ideals could be derived only from the Christian Faith. Now we must add that certain Christian values can be maintained only in a democratically ordered society. This is the reason for the Christian's concern regarding the fate of democracy in any land.

In this article I propose briefly to apply the Christian critique to democracy as it is found in practice in some of the countries of the West. My purpose in doing this is to warn my countrymen against certain evils that have crept into contemporary democracy in the West. These evils are due partly to false ideological foundations and partly to culture in industrialized countries being increasingly moulded by technology. The evils are avoidable to some extent at least, and a country which has just started on the democratic path may with benefit enquire into the causes and nature of these evils.

## Secular Versus Christian Ideology

In the first place let us examine some of the false ideological foundations of modern democracy. Modern Europe owes a great debt of gratitude to two great movements, viz. the Renaissance and the Reformation. Both these movements contributed ideas which revolutionized the life of European peoples. Some of these ideas emanating separately from the two movements had certain close resemblances. Nevertheless there was an over-plus of meaning in those ideas contributed by the Reformation, for the Reformation was a religious movement, whereas the Renaissance was purely a secular movement. This over-plus of meaning constituted a big difference despite many resemblances. Though Christian influences played a no mean part in the development of democratic ideology in the West, the ideas growing out of the

Renaissance on the whole seemed to have had a greater influence. This is understandable. The Renaissance had an earlier start and as a secular movement it touched the interests of a far greater circle of people than a religious movement could. Furthermore; the Reformation initially had hardly touched the Anglo-Saxon world and in France the political forces were against it. But there was in course of time a serious confusion.

The resemblance in certain respects between some of the ideas of the Renaissance and some of the Reformation, tended to make people think that in adopting the ideas of the Renaissance they were adopting the ideas of the Christian Faith. The result was that the over-plus of meaning attached to the ideas supplied by the Reformation was ignored and the ideological basis for democracy in its inception was supplied by a pagan philosophy that bore a superficial resemblance to Christian philosophy. The West has had to pay a heavy price for this and it is only in recent times that the realization has come that a civilization that was thought to be Christian was not in fact wholly so.

### **The Ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation**

What is the character of the ideas contributed by the Renaissance and what is the difference between its ideas and those of the Reformation? Our answer will cover only a limited field. J. A. Symonds writes thus about the Renaissance: 'What the word Renaissance means is new birth to liberty—the spirit of mankind recovering consciousness and the power of self-determination, recognizing the beauty of the outer world and of the body through art, liberating reason in science and the conscience in religion, restoring culture to intelligence and establishing the principle of political freedom.' No words could perhaps more adequately describe the impulses that are at work in the awakening of the whole of the East at present than these words of Symonds about the Renaissance. And yet these impulses, noble as they are, can supply but an inadequate foundation on which to build our future. It is true that the Renaissance discovered certain truths of utmost importance. There was the re-discovery of man as an individual with the right to self-determination. There was the consequent re-discovery of the values of liberty and freedom. Man was removed from the sphere of an authority operating mechanically and impersonally. His capacity for reason was recognized and awarded the right to order his life according to its best lights. The Renaissance looked upon man, however, as an autonomous being, his existence and nature requiring no extra-mundane reference for their explanation. Man had certain 'natural rights' and among them was the right to personal liberty and freedom.

The Reformers also laid stress on the reality of man's individuality and on his right to personal freedom. This they stressed because there was no ambiguity on this point in the Bible, but they followed the Bible further and sought to understand man from the fact of his being a creature, owing his existence to God his Creator. The implication of such a belief is that 'natural rights' on which secularistic humanism of the Renaissance tradition placed such a premium is a false notion. Man as a creature has no rights of any kind 'natural' to him or more clearly no rights which he does not owe to the goodness and benevolence of his Creator. The rights he has, including the right to personal freedom



are those conferred on him by God. Freedom then, as a right conferred by God carried with it responsibility. Man is accountable to God for the way in which he uses his freedom. His is a stewardship of that which is given to him as a gift.

One might say that such a religious reference is not necessary in order that one might use his freedom with a sense of responsibility. The idea that freedom should be used responsibly is not, it might be contended, a revolutionary idea. This may be so, but the question of sanctions is involved here. What is the sanction for bidding man to use his freedom responsibly?

### The Legacy of Secularistic Humanism

In modern times, partly as a legacy of secularistic humanism coming down from the Renaissance, we have practically ceased to talk of sanctions except in a legal and juridical sense. Legal sanctions can, however, be outwitted by the clever. There can be collusion between those who administer law and others to defeat the purposes of law. In other words external sanctions are feeble and can be made ineffective by those who wish to do so. I think, if pressed, we will all recognize that ultimately the only sanctions for responsible behaviour are those that are internal to man. But many are content to recognize the *internal source in the reason of man*. This is in the true tradition of the Renaissance spirit. It was the fashion a few years ago for some men in Indian universities to swear by the names of H. G. Wells and Bertrand Russell. Planning for health, welfare and education was thought to be the only requirement for creating a responsible society. With proper material conditions and liberal education man's reason would make him act in society like a responsible being. When H. G. Wells' last testimony was given to the world in his 'Mind at the end of its tether' it came as a rude shock to his disciples that this prophet of secular humanism could see only the extinction of homo-sapiens as its ultimate goal.

The present state of secular thought with regard to the nature of man is one of bewilderment and confusion. Man's mind is unravelling with a frightening speed dangerous secrets of Nature and yet man's reason has not roused any confidence that it can use these secrets with any sense of responsibility. Secular humanism has trusted human reason to make man morally a responsible being. The fact is that human *reason* can recognize only *prudence* as the spring of moral action. The basis of altruism is only egoism, for individual welfare is possible only when society is healthy! In all the grandiloquent speeches one hears outside Christian circles concerning the need for a more responsible society and in most of the seemingly learned treatises on the social obligations of the individual, the motive that is appealed to more often than not is self-interest! The basis of social enlightenment is enlightened self-interest. You cannot but do this if you depend on reason as the only sanction for morality. It is difficult to discover in the natural reason of man any ground why one should concern himself with his neighbour's good as an end in itself. The tragedy of the whole approach lies in the fact that it forgets that self-interest is the primary and root cause of man's irresponsible behaviour in society and in appealing to such a motive we can never make a man altruistic. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns or

figs of thistles ? (Mt. 7: 16). Prudence may dictate that the interests of the self are sometimes served better by anti-social behaviour than by responsible social behaviour, and if one counters that this is short-sighted policy, the reply to it may be that one's life is after all short !

### Christian Basis of Responsibility

As I stated in my article in the last Number of this *Journal*, the Christian looks for the sanctions of morality (responsible behaviour is moral behaviour) in God's nature ; in the nature of that which alone is true ultimately. The Universe is morally conditioned, for it is the creation of a moral personality, and to be in tune with that which is true to the heart of the Universe, one ought to be morally good himself. If he is otherwise, he is out of tune with that which is true to the heart of the Universe—he is an alien in the Universe, lost and lonely. Christ commands that one should love his enemies that he may be like his heavenly Father. To be like the heavenly Father, one must be willing to live in the Father's realm, to live in communion and fellowship with Him. But to live in such a state of fellowship, it is assumed that one is at-one with the heavenly Father.

To be at-one with the heavenly Father, two conditions are required. In the first place one ought to renounce all false philosophies such as that as an autonomous being man has certain 'natural rights'. But the renunciation of such a false philosophy is not easy, for such a philosophy arises sometimes not out of deliberate atheism but out of man's pride and egoism. There is nothing more immediately, superficially true to man than his own self. The world he knows is often the world his self has created. To give up the self is to give up all that has been most immediately real to him. Therefore as a second condition for such a fellowship, there is demanded an act of will—an act of surrender to God. This is being reconciled to God in Christ through Christ's atonement. With this act of will, in this act of surrender, the little world that man has created for himself, and in which he has made a prisoner of himself, disappears and he steps into the larger world of God. He has attained to sonship and he is no longer an alien in the world—an alien to that which is true to the heart of the Universe. He finds himself in a new relationship—a new relationship to God, the world and man, and this new relationship is the spring of his moral action.

Freedom as a 'natural right' is illusory. It is limited in all directions. The 'natural man' has no more freedom than his 'nature' allows him and that 'nature' allows him precious little. He is at the mercy of his instincts and passions. His freedom in society is also greatly circumscribed. We all know the story of the man who in his leisurely walk wielding his umbrella struck a passer-by with it. When the passer-by protested, he replied that he had the freedom to wield his umbrella as he liked, to which the rejoinder was 'Sir your freedom ends where my nose begins!' But there is no limitation to the freedom to walk the second mile ; there is no limitation to behave responsibly in society. Freedom is real only when the will of man purposes good. But such a will is not the will of the 'natural man' but of the redeemed. This is the teaching of the Reformers, of the Bible, of the Christian Faith.

## A Philosophy of Society

In order to be able to inculcate the habit of responsible social behaviour in the individual, even the secularist must have a philosophy of society. The Renaissance rediscovered the individual but it had no clear conception of society. It is doubtful if a purely secular outlook can ever develop a philosophy of society. It may have a sociology, i.e., a descriptive science of the evolution of society. Sociology, however, cannot supply a social ideal unless it ceases to be a descriptive science and becomes a normative science. Ethics deals not with what is but with what ought to be. I am conscious that attempts have been made to derive 'what ought to be' from what is. At best such attempts can give us only a very tentative and relative notion of what 'ought to be'. I said that while the Renaissance rediscovered the individual, its ideology had no clear conception of society. English Liberalism of the last century and the earlier years of this century followed the lead of the Renaissance and defined freedom atomistically. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* expresses the spirit of British Liberal thought which now is practically dead. The philosophy of *laissez-faire* was extreme individualism. There were many good Christians who believed that since Christ taught the value of an individual, *laissez-faire* was quite Christian in spirit.

Christian Faith has a philosophy of society. Society is as clearly comprehended in the purposes of God as the individual himself. God created not only Adam but Eve, i.e. a family. God called not only an individual to serve Him but a nation. Social and individual values are emphasized in the Gospels. The shepherd no doubt goes out in search of the one sheep that is lost from his hundred, but the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and lay down his life as a ransom for many.

We admitted that the old British Liberalism is no longer of any influence. But there are still men in many countries to whom free enterprise is a religious conviction. Such people, despite strong individualistic tendencies, perhaps believe in the necessity to preserve a certain social ideal, even as the old Liberalism to be fair to it, did believe. Such people however under-rate the strength of egoistic passion in man, and egoistic passion may continuously motivate men to act anti-socially. This is not a matter of speculation but a fact of observation. But what answer has our contemporary secular society found for this? The answer is that the State should be given the power to impose controls with a view 'to coercing the anarchy of conflicting human interests into some kind of order'. Our modern editions of Liberals object to this and perhaps with some justification. It may be that there is no other way of dealing with egoistic passion.

A refined version of a State armed with power to impose controls is the Welfare State! The practices of the Welfare State are however sometimes not many steps removed from the practices of a totalitarian State. The point is that while secular thought may perhaps be ready to recognize the strength of man's egoistic passion, being secular, it fails to see that egoistic passion is only a symptom of a deep-rooted disease of man, viz. sin, man's alienation from God. *As long as we have a sinful society State controls are necessary, and the least of evils to deal with*



*an evil situation is the Welfare State.* But the problem of responsible behaviour in society may still remain. This problem can be dealt with only by a religious approach, by the Christian approach. The Christian view of freedom eventually is that man has freedom only to do the right. He may do wrong but that is misusing freedom. It is sin. So man will know how to use freedom only when he is redeemed from sin. All this means that democracy can grow only in a truly Christian soil, that secular foundations are feeble to sustain democracy.

### Democracy and Technology

Now let us turn our attention to evils which are the result of human culture being increasingly moulded by technology. This topic is well covered in contemporary literature relevant to the subject. Nevertheless there are one or two points which have not received the attention they deserve.

We all recognize that one of the evil results of a technological civilization is the increasing depersonalization of man. There are several factors which are responsible for this de-personalization. We have clearly recognized up to now certain of these factors. The impersonal rôle, for instance, that a factory hand plays in the vast organization of men and machinery is one of the clearly recognized factors, and industrial welfare in progressive countries is trying to tackle it. But there are other subtle influences contributing to this process of depersonalization which are not yet clearly recognized.

Democratic ideology has contested and rightly so, the Marxist thesis that the most intelligible and the only valid interpretative category of human activity and history, the only value ascribable to man the individual, is the economic value. No doubt we are told that in Communist societies cultural values as such are not neglected but that they are only weaned away from bourgeois preferences and recreated in the interests of the common man. The question is not whether a Communist society makes provision for the cultural interests of the common man but what value eventually it places on man himself. The issue is not the recognition of the need of culture empirically and pragmatically, but whether you recognize that there is something inherent and innate in the nature of man which needs satisfaction not only economically but culturally and spiritually. If the supreme interpretative category of human activity and history is the economic, man is reduced eventually to an economic animal. Democratic ideology naturally and rightly recoils from such a position. But paradoxically democracy is forced to acquiesce in practice to that which it denies in theory! In a super-industrial and technological civilization economic activity over-shadows every other activity. Industrial enterprise based on an ever-expanding scientific discovery and knowledge can hardly ever be static. Such an enterprise is always producing new things and is creating new wants in man and society. Furthermore in a free society under the compelling conditions of competition entrepreneurs can survive only if they go one better than their competitors. So there is an ever-expanding production and manufacture of new lines. While all this is in a sense undoubtedly to the benefit of the consumer in numerous ways, nevertheless what were luxuries once become in course of time necessities. Competitive industry

in order to thrive is compelled to create new necessities. Man's life becomes increasingly complicated economically and industrial enterprise over-shadows every other enterprise. Industrial production becomes the most dominant engagement of a people. And so you talk of the population of a country in terms of 'man power', parallel to the 'horse power' that the mechanically driven machinery in the factories possesses. The concept of 'man power' is primarily (excepting in war) an economic concept expressing an economic value, just as 'horse power' in its utility expresses an economic value. This is naked de-personalization of man the individual and an estimate of him in only an instrumental capacity.

There is another subtle influence of a super-industrial and technological civilization that contributes to the de-personalization of man. Highly industrialized communities tend to develop an exclusively activist civilization. Life for individuals in such societies is caught up in a whirl of activities and there is little leisure for the more elevated pursuits of culture. Activity becomes a second habit and hence the contradiction that, tired and weighed down by ceaseless activity, people ask for leisure—a 48 hour week, then a 42 hour week and then a 36 hour week—and when they obtain it they do not know how to use it or relax in it. Anatole France writing in one of his works *The Red Lily* puts into the mouth of one of the characters the following words to describe Napoleon's character: 'A poet, he knew no poetry but that of action. His great dream of life was earth-bound. . . . His youth, or rather his sublime adolescence endured to the end, because all the days of his life were powerless to form in him a conscious maturity. Such is the condition of all men of action. They live entirely for the moment, and their genius is concentrated on one single point. They do not grow. The hours of their lives are not bound together by the chain of grave disinterested reflexion. They do not develop; one condition merely succeeds another in a series of deeds. Thus they have no inner life. The absence of inner life is particularly noticeable in Napoleon. . . . He lived outside himself.'<sup>1</sup>

The words would obviously be untrue if used as a general characterization of all the peoples in industrial countries. But they more or less characterize a general tendency among many caught up in the vortex of industrial and commercial activity.

A person who is thus dwarfed intellectually and spiritually by continuous activity is conquered easily by forces that work for de-personalization. Unable to judge for himself, he is led by the nose by others. Propaganda of even the lowest type triumphs. The success of the sensational Press in many countries is the measure of man's intellectual and spiritual immaturity and a testimony that men in large numbers live either a sub-personal life or are de-personalized.

De-personalization, of course, eliminates individuality and this leads to 'massification' of men. This 'massification' is a growing phenomenon even in democratic countries and is a tragedy and a danger because democracy cannot survive under such a condition. Leaders in democratic countries recognize this. Now this raises the question at which perhaps some will scoff and which to many may appear as savouring of an ante-deluvian mind. The question is whether *unrestrained* indus-

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<sup>1</sup> Anatole France *The Red Lily* Tr. Stephens.

trialization is not fraught with dangers to democracy, and whether industrialization should not be kept within limits? Let me not be misunderstood. I am not pleading for Gandhian economics. Such economics are clearly impossible at this late day. Moreover we cannot under-rate the good that industrialization aided by technology has done for man. But unless we are prepared to allow industrialization to defeat democracy and make a shambles of it, we must keep it within limits. Of what benefit is it to man to be rich in earthly comforts and possessions, if the price he has to pay for them is his soul? While democracy cannot thrive in poverty, filth and squalor, it is doubtful if it can survive under conditions that lead to 'massification' of men. While in a country like India the standards of living must be improved and that quickly too if democracy is to become stable, we should lose democracy eventually or the essential values for which it stands, if we make idols of these standards and worship at their altars. We cannot avoid the moral consequences from either low economic standards of living or high economic standards of living, or standards of living that have no ceiling fixed for them, and consequently soar ever higher. We need to discuss this question seriously.

My purpose in writing this article has been to invite serious thinking in this country concerning a doctrine of man and of society. In the absence of a true doctrine of man and of society we shall only face bewilderment, such as many nations that have tried democracy for long are facing today. May not this doctrine be found in the Bible?



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# Book Reviews

*Christ of the New Testament*, by A. W. Argyle. Published by the Carey Kingsgate Press Ltd., London, W.C. 1. Price 10/6.

This is a straightforward and most readable book setting forth the New Testament doctrine of Christ after a careful examination of evidence. A happy feature of the book is that it focuses the attention on the cardinal points of the teaching of the New Testament avoiding complicated discussions of a technical character. Further, the reader's attention is frequently drawn to the oft neglected aspects of the Christological doctrine. Though the scope of enquiry is limited to the documents of the New Testament the writer brings to bear upon the discussion his wide knowledge of the subject.

In the opening chapter Mr. Argyle remarks that the task of New Testament theology is to give expression to the conviction that Jesus is God and man. He essays to show how the New Testament teaching repudiates docetism, adoptionism and Apollonarianism and comments on the inadequacy of the Kenotic theory. He observes that the purpose of Phil. 2:5-10 on which the Kenotic theories are based is homilistical and practical rather than metaphysical. 'How can the Divine become human while remaining Divine?' This is the perennial problem of Christology. The author discusses the Logos doctrine with the suggestion that it is fruitful of solution. The Logos doctrine made a sudden and dramatic entry into Christian thought through St. John's Gospel and made an equally sudden exit after engaging the attention of the Christian Platonists of Alexandria. In recent years it was Brunner who said that the Logos doctrine was an indispensable basis for the reconstruction of Christology. When St. John said 'the Word was with (the) God and the Word was God', he was affirming both the identity and distinction between God and the Word. The Word has its whole being within Deity and at the same time the relationship between Deity and the Word is one of intimate personal relationship, the supreme example of which is the Father-Son relationship. The Logos dwells in men as light and life in as much as men are the offspring of God. Thus it is the basis of kinship between man and God. The Logos conception provides us with the principle of mediation which is essential for determining the relationship between God and creation, and pre-eminently between God and the Incarnation. As stated by St. John the Logos doctrine establishes the kinship between God and man on the one hand, and on the other provides the most satisfactory theory for understanding the how of the Incarnation.

In the next chapter the writer goes on to show that the supreme value of the Incarnation lies in the death of Jesus. This essential relationship between the Incarnation and the cross is something frequently forgotten in our preaching. The preaching of the cross must always

include the Incarnation as the New Testament links them together. In the same chapter the author points out that the fact of the Virgin Birth of our Lord is not intended to provide with an additional argument for the divinity of Jesus. Its value lay in that while it proclaimed the divinity of Jesus it established His humanity. The prevailing heresy in the 1st century was docetism which minimized the humanity of our Lord, and the doctrine of the Virgin Birth guarded the truth contained in 'the Word *became flesh*.'

Of the various interpretations of the death of Jesus Mr. Argyle supports the theory that it is victory won over the powers of evil and death, but he hastens to add that the conception of victory is more frequently associated in the New Testament teaching with the resurrection of Jesus. This should help us to view the cross and resurrection not so much as two separate events but as a single act wrought for the salvation of mankind. One is grateful to the writer for the forceful reminder that 'salvation in the New Testament is a gradual eschatological process starting with justification by the cross, but including the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the ultimate glorifying of the persevering believer by God in the final consummation'. Perhaps one ought to add that the whole process is carried out in the sphere of the Church.

That the resurrection of Jesus constituted the victory over the forces of evil and death, and that our resurrection consequent on our union in faith with Christ is a present experience, are among the important ideas expressed in the chapter on the resurrection. But the author weakens his case for resurrection when he says, 'Immortality of the soul is implied in the doctrine of the Logos and the doctrine of Immortality is useful as correcting the spatial and temporal associations which cling to the idea of resurrection'. While this may be true as far it goes the Christian hope is certainly 'the resurrection of the body'.

The chapter on the exaltation of Jesus points to the errors into which we are likely to fall unless we hold fast to the facts of ascension, and the ascension of Jesus is on the right hand of God. Eternal life as the present possession, and the gift of the Holy Spirit are dependent upon the exaltation of Jesus.

Any book on doctrine which takes us back to the New Testament is most valuable and hence to be warmly welcomed. This is abundantly true of the book under review. As it is written in such a simple and attractive style it is likely to be in great demand by the laity and ordinands alike.

E. Sambayya

*Biblical Authority For Today*, Ed. A. Richardson & W. Schweitzer.  
S.C.M. Press, London. Price 18s.

*The Church of the New Testament*, L. G. Champion. Carey Kingsgate Press, London Price 7s. 6d.

These two apparently diverse volumes, received simultaneously for review by coincidence rather than design, proved to have an unexpected mutual relevance. The former is a symposium produced by the World

Council of Churches as a result of conferences held between 1946 and 1949 in Britain, Switzerland and Holland ; the latter is the production of a Baptist minister as a result of study-groups in his own church, delivered as a series of lectures to an international group in Switzerland. Their interest, particularly for readers in India, is in the way in which they indicate very clearly the trend of theological thinking in the West on the connected subjects of Bible and Church, the former volume on a somewhat more 'academic' level, the latter on a more 'popular', but no less profound, level.

It is impossible in less than an extended essay to review a symposium of this type in detail, but various general observations are needed, and the articles which more particularly deal with Indian problems may be considered more fully. The first part of the volume outlines 'Fundamental Considerations' on the question of Biblical Authority, from the point of view of seven scholars of different denominations ; the second part is an extremely able survey by Dr. Wolfgang Schweitzer of the present position in the study of Biblical Theology and Ethics ; the third part contains five essays on 'Principles of Interpretation' and a concluding section incorporating a set of 'Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of the Bible' which were accepted after much discussion by a group of scholars of different traditions and nations, brought together in 1949 ; the fourth part consists of six essays on specific applications of Biblical authority to such questions as 'Church and State', 'Property', and 'Nation and Race'. Since the avowed aim of the book is to set out the way in which the Church as a whole might be able to give an agreed answer to the social and ethical problems of the day, it might be expected that the last section of the book would be the most interesting and important, yet the present reviewer found that, on the contrary, the first section reached a level which was not fully maintained, and the last section as a whole was somewhat disappointing.

The most interesting feature of the first section was that it was quite impossible to discover from the matter the denominational allegiance of five of the seven contributors. The Orthodox representative was quite uncompromising in his orthodoxy, whilst the Anglican tried his best to prove that one particular section of that conglomeration of thought was 'the Anglican position', but any of the others might have changed their labels without any more than a slight modification of their positions. This does not mean that there was complete agreement, or that the various essays did not show differences of thought and approach, but those differences were not by any means denominational. This phenomenon was repeated throughout the book, and leads one to realize further that the theological approach of the whole volume was remarkably self-consistent. It is probably inevitable that those who are interested in a particular line of thought should appear like-minded, and that those who would not be 'at home' in a World Council study-group would not attend. There is in this a double potentiality, on the one hand of a truly 'Ecumenical' theology developing, which can supersede divisions, or on the other, of a 'World Council Theology' which will only exacerbate them. This symposium shows distinct signs of the more optimistic development, and there is certainly no sign of any attempt to exclude differences which remain. Some who are a little doubtful about the soundness of the World Council's approach will



probably be agreeably surprised to find it much nearer to their own ideas than they had thought. The emphasis throughout is on the Bible as a whole, containing the record of God's revelation to Man, which culminates in, and receives its meaning from, the central act of the Incarnation. The most significant of the 'guiding principles' laid down is that the interpretation of any specific passage can only be approached in the light of its context in the Bible as a whole.

This principle has been well worked-out in the so-called 'Baptist Contribution' to the first section from the pen of Dr. V. E. Devadutt. The essay is rather a study of Biblical Authority as it concerns Christians in a predominantly non-Christian environment, and therefore is the most relevant chapter in the book for Indian readers of any denomination. The masterly analysis of the difference between the Hindu and Christian standpoints concludes by saying that the Hindu relies primarily on man's 'intuitive insights into the nature of Reality', whereas to the Christian the foundations of his theology are in 'the self-disclosing activity of God' of which the Bible is a record. It is this fundamental difference which affects the attitude of each to the Bible. To the Hindu there is no difficulty in placing the New Testament, at least, by the side of the Vedas and respecting each equally. Even some Christians are led astray into the idea of substituting some part of the Hindu Scriptures for the Old Testament, but a true understanding of the nature of Revelation and Biblical authority makes this impossible, for the revelation of God's personal activity is the subject of the whole Bible, and the whole is necessary to understand the meaning of any part. Dr. Devadutt makes a further important point in his emphasis that the Christian ethic is dependent on the Christian revelation, and any attempt to set it up as a separable ideal is impossible. The whole essay breathes a refreshing and challenging call to present the Christian gospel to the non-Christian in its fullness, without any attempt to minimize the real values of Hinduism. It is also an object-lesson to theologians in India on the importance of really knowing something about Hinduism whilst trying to preach the Christian faith.

A sentence towards the end of Dr. Devadutt's essay leads on directly to Dr. Champion's book on the New Testament Church. He says 'The ethos of a fellowship like the Church is based on personal relationship of a more or less intimate character', and whilst this particular statement may not occur elsewhere in the symposium, it is implied through a great deal of it. It might also be the text for Dr. Champion, whose study of the Church is taken largely from this angle. In some ways Dr. Champion's style is deceptively simple, and the reader may overlook the fundamental points which he is making. The fact that the book is not overtly 'doctrinal' does not mean that Dr. Champion is not concerned with doctrine; he is rather approaching doctrine from an unusual angle. He himself says (p. 76) 'our attention can be concentrated on the apostolic preaching, upon the formation of Christian communities, upon the organization of offices within the communities . . . but we must not miss the more fundamental truth that all this growth and the methods by which it was achieved are just witnesses to the reality of that spiritual life which was not consciously concerned with methods and plans but . . . had to go on by the necessity of its own nature, reproducing itself'. He emphasizes that the basis of

the Church was a new personal relationship, vertical and horizontal, in that men entered into relationship with God as Father, and as a corollary, with one another as brethren. Dr Champion was not one of the group which produced the symposium, and he cannot have read it before he produced his book, but he gives a very remarkable model for any minister or leader to follow if he wants to present the essence of a somewhat technical theological work in a way which will be acceptable to non-technical minds. Perhaps the best advice is that the minister should himself read the symposium, and expound Dr. Champion to his people ; the central theme of the latter need not be beyond a village audience, whilst at the same time it demands study from those in particular who are trying to lead the Church in India into realizing its own true basis and its place in the *Una Sancta*.

D. F. HUDSON.

*Christianity Explained to Muslims*, L. Bevan Jones. Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16. Price Rs.4.

This book was originally published in 1937 and we now have a Second Edition, with many revisions, chiefly in Chapters II and VI. The author explains the purpose of the book thus : ' The primary purpose of this book is to help the Christian evangelist to examine dispassionately certain outstanding difficulties which the Muslim people experience in regard to the Christian faith, and, at the same time, so to restate the truths involved as to leave at least no reasonable ground for misunderstanding ' (Page 1). The author achieves remarkable success in this. He explains successively in simple, clear and unambiguous language the Moslem difficulties with regard to the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, their character which differs from what he considers is revealed literature, the Person of Christ, the Holy Trinity, the Work of Christ with all that is implied in that work, etc. These difficulties are not merely the difficulties of individual Moslems. They represent, as it were, Islam's critique of Christianity. The author not only states these difficulties but suggests definite lines of approach to the Moslem to make him understand the central doctrines of the Christian faith. The most difficult of problems for the Christian evangelist is always that of ' communication '. In order that he may succeed in some measure in making the Gospel intelligible and relevant to his hearers, he must have sympathetic appreciation of the mind of his hearers.

This book of Mr. Bevan Jones is the result of his experience first as an evangelistic Missionary among Moslems in East Bengal for over twenty years and later as a teacher in the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies, when it was in Lahore. The treatment of the subjects in the book therefore bears the impress of one who struggled with the practical problems of an evangelist. This is an invaluable guide to those engaged in work among the Moslems. It should also be read by every lay Christian living in a Moslem environment. It is to be hoped that the book will be translated into Indian languages, especially Bengali and Urdu.

V. E. D.



*Issues underlying Third World Conference on Faith and Order discussed  
in 'The Ecumenical Review'*

By way of preparation for the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, which was held at Lund, Sweden, from August 15-29, a series of articles on problems of church unity appears in the April 1952 issue of the quarterly *Ecumenical Review* published by the World Council of Churches, 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva.

The issue opens with a message from the Chairman of Faith and Order, the Most Rev. Yngve Brilioth, Archbishop of Upsala. An Editorial points out: 'The vocation of Faith and Order is to remind the Churches that "*co-operation is not enough*" and stresses the need for "a unity which is demanded alike by the Church's worship of God and by her mission to the world".'

In 'Issues on the Church' the Rev Fr. A. G. Hebert, of the (Anglican) Society of the Sacred Mission, considers the Faith and Order report on the Church prepared for the conference in the light of the challenge to Christians which disunity presents. Bishop Wilhelm Staehlin, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oldenburg, Germany, offers 'Insights and Open Questions concerning Ways of Worship', while Dr. Perry Epler Gresham, Minister (Disciples of Christ) in Detroit, contributes 'Issues in Inter-Communion'. Professor Jacques Ellul (French Reformed Church) analyses the bearing on Church division of psychological, historical and administrative conservatism among church people, as well as of the political situation.

Writing on 'Disunities Created by Differing Patterns of Church Life', the Rev. G. R. Cragg, of Montreal, instances social status, varying attitudes towards what is regarded as permissible behaviour, and church worship in North American church life. The Rev. Oliver Tomkins, Secretary of the Faith and Order Commission, recalls the significance of the document 'The Church, the Churches and the Council', and surveys the whole ecumenical scene, including those Christian bodies who are within the World Council and those who are without. 'Beyond our sight there is unity still, for Christ is not divided and cannot be destroyed.'

The reports of the three theological sub-commissions, 'The Church', 'Ways of Worship' and 'Intercommunion', and longer theological publications on these and similar topics from different countries are discussed in book reviews by various contributors.



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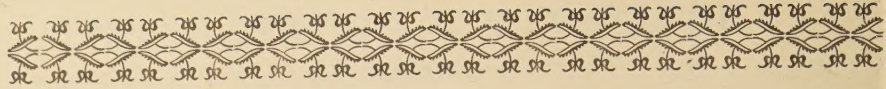
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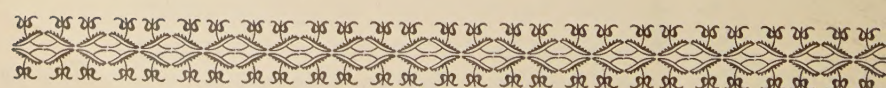
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